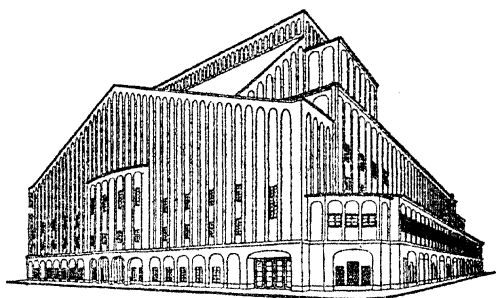






# THEATRE ARTS MAGAZINE



VOLUME V -- NUMBER 1

JANUARY 1921



# THEATRE ARTS MAGAZINE

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## Drama the Creator

DRAMA breeds not only imagination but courage. The veriest coward caught in the activity of an audience, surely and deliberately handled by a dramatist, cannot but be swept out of his fears, though it be only for the space of an hour or two, from which he may afterwards suffer a terrible reaction. The memory of it will endure, and he will come back to the theatre for more of the succor it has given him.

Such a drama, of course, cannot live in a theatre designed to flatter and amuse audiences of the dull and over-comfortable, though it is not the audiences that are at fault but those who prey upon them. Any audience is a good audience, if it be rightly handled; and even dull and comfortable people are human beings, though they may not know it. There is no such thing as an audience that cannot be moved by the spectacle of human beings loving, hating, weeping, laughing, lying, intriguing, swindling, in terms of life which is just enough beyond their existence to necessitate an effort of the imagination, difficult perhaps for the individual, but easy enough for the group. The imagination is forward-looking. It can understand the past but without any very passionate interest. The true dramatist senses life as it is becoming. As he is more conscious than the people of his time, so will his characters be just a little more conscious than himself. . . . In the theatre there is intensified the process by which human society is sustained. Here is an instrument that was used in ancient days for the revelation of those gods whom men conceived as being superior to and separate from themselves, when free men might have souls—as though the soul could be possessed—while slaves were part of the surrounding scenery, an unpleasant necessity. And now, when humanity is aching in its hunger for the soul, not to possess but to be possessed by it, to learn the process by which every minute, every hour, every day may be devoted to its release, there is no other instrument, no other means by which the veil of consciousness can be stripped away from the beauty that quivers through it.

—GILBERT CANNAN in *The Release of the Soul*.



Painted curtain by Pablo Picasso for *The Three-Cornered Hat* as produced by the Russian Ballet in Paris. Of the recent tendency of the Ballet to simplify scenery, Huntly Carter writes from Paris as follows: "Massine, who produces all the pieces nowadays, seems to be actuated by a desire to obtain as much space as he can for the movement of the dancers. The result is that he gets the new decorators to keep the stage as clear as possible. Thus Picasso's setting is little more than a painted background. The same may be said of Matisse's setting for Stravinsky's *Nightingale*." (Reproduced from the official program published by the *Commoedia Illustré*, Paris.)

## THE NEW SEASON

### NEW YORK SEES NATIVE AND EUROPEAN PLAYS OF REAL DISTINCTION

BY KENNETH MACGOWAN

AT this writing, the new season is hardly more than a third gone, yet already it seems to have taken shape, to have developed characteristics and a personality. After a very bad start, it has launched vigorously ahead with a wider and a better variety of plays than had been seen in New York at this time last season. For the January issue of last winter there were only three English plays of distinction to write about, and only three American: *The Lost Leader*, *The Faithful* (both failures financially), and *Too Many Husbands*; *Clarence*, *Delcassée*, and *Wedding Bells*. This season New York has seen two dramas by Galsworthy, *The Mob* and *The Skin Game*, the first performance on any stage of Shaw's *Heartbreak House*, David Pinski's *Treasure*, and three American comedies of excellent quality, *The Bad Man*, *Enter Madame*, and *The First Year*, as well as a remarkable drama by Eugene O'Neill, *The Emperor Jones*. Moreover, all but one of these three English pieces and five American have won considerable success. *The Treasure* alone found small audiences.

A characteristic development of the new season has been a noticeable increase in the tendency of the past two years towards the romantic and the picturesque. Nine plays of uneven merit have been produced in the past four months which could not have escaped the ban of half a dozen years ago against the "costume play." Torrid Spain excuses the mediocrity of *Spanish Love* and *Thy Name is Woman*; Mexico and China furnish color for *The Bad Man* and *The Lady of the Lamp*; *Mecca* is laid in ancient Cairo, and *Little Old New York* returns to the city of Washington

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Irving; the West Indies claim *The Emperor Jones*; *The Tavern* wanders wildly and satirically in any time but our own, and William Faversham takes up his rapier after fifteen years to play in *The Prince and the Pauper*. Of all these productions only *The Emperor Jones* and *The Bad Man* have any distinct quality about them. The importance of the rest is merely that they show that at last our stage will accept a larger vision and a richer atmosphere if only some first-rate playwright will turn his mind to the imaginative.

Finally, the new season has displayed such distinguished and individualized impersonation as we seldom see on our stage: O. P. Heggie's spiritualized caricature of the bailiff's man in *Happy Go Lucky*; Holbrook Blinn's pungent bandit in *The Bad Man*; Ben-Ami's superb and terrifying picture of the sufferings of the artistic temperament in *Samson and Delilah*; George M. Cohan's really distinguished study of a kindly and pathetic failure in the first act of *The Meanest Man in the World*; Frank Craven's homely and adroit sketch of Middle Western youth in *The First Year*; Minnie Dupree's panicky little teacher in *The Charm School*; the English grace and distinction of Geoffry and Fred Kerr in *Just Suppose*, and Elizabeth Risdon's technically brilliant and varied playing of Ellie in *Heartbreak House*.

## II.

In spite of the various sorts of distinction which flourish in the plays by Galsworthy and Shaw which have come to our footlights this fall, it is at last possible to begin a review of the New York stage with serious consideration of native work. In *The Emperor Jones*, *The Treasure*, *The Bad Man* and *The First Year*, added to *Enter Madame*, may be found creative qualities as varied and as characteristic as American life itself. They have native distinction. They are not mere imitations of English models.

Of them all, David Pinski's *Treasure* alone is alien in people and point of view. And yet this ironic Russian comedy of the Jewish pale is surely pertinent to American life, for it comes out of the tradition of a people who have sent

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us in a quarter century a hundred settlers for every one that came from England to found our national stock. Moreover, this rich and humorous vision of the part that money plays in human existence is perhaps more pertinent to America than to any other culture of today. .

*The Treasure* was produced by the Theatre Guild as the opening play of its third season at the Garrick. Since Lee Simonson conceived the background and lights, it was as richly illusive in atmosphere as any of the work of this group. Much of the playing had a similar appropriateness and truth, yet the value of the individual impersonations was somewhat lost through the inability of the director, Emanuel Reicher, to create a varied and lively tempo. Upon Mr. Reicher must rest the blame for the failure of *The Treasure* to appeal effectively to as large a circle as enjoyed his productions of *The Power of Darkness* and *Jane Clegg*. *The Treasure* is a play of universal application, but it is at the same time a play which may seem a trifle monotonous and is much too long, if it is not given every aid that imaginative and adroit direction can supply.

### III.

In *The Emperor Jones* that remarkable organization, the Provincetown Players, which shows no fear whatever of producing ten very ordinary and ineffective plays for every single contribution to the advancement of American playwriting, has opened up a new reach in American drama and in the talents of that fine young playwright of its discovery, Eugene O'Neill. The play itself is printed in this issue of the Theatre Arts Magazine. There in its lines you will find the same strong and natural speech that has always set Mr. O'Neill apart from all of our playwrights except Edward Sheldon. There you will also find two qualities that Mr. Sheldon notably lacks. You will find in the denouement, with its off-stage death, a true and untheatrical power; and you will find a new strain of rhythmized beauty in his long monologs. Here, as in no other American play except that "sport," *The Yellow Jacket*, there is genuine imagination both in the material and in the structure of the drama.

These eight short scenes shake free from the traditional forms of our drama; they carry forward easily and honestly upon the track of discovery. We follow a path that gathers bit by bit the progressive steps in a study of personal and racial psychology of real imaginative truth.

Considering the record of the Provincetown Players for producing their real discoveries, such as the plays of Mr. O'Neill, Susan Glaspell and Edna St. Vincent Millay, with little more adequacy than they give to their experimental commonplaces, their production of *The Emperor Jones* is a surprise as well as a sensation. During the summer the Provincetown Players installed on the tiny stage of their makeshift theatre near Washington Square one of those plaster sky-domes or *Kuppelhorizonte* with which so many German theatres have replaced the flat canvas of the cyclorama. It is a property of this curving plaster to catch and mix light so deftly that, in the diffused glow that reaches the spectator, it is impossible to focus the eye with any degree of assurance upon the actual surface of the dome. Well lighted as to color and intensity, the *Kuppelhorizont* can counterfeit the beauty and almost the reality of the sky. Again and again in the seven jungle scenes, which follow the flight of the Pullman porter from his brief but prosperous rule as emperor of "bush niggers," Director George Cram Cook and his scenic artist, Cleon Throckmorton, have used this sky with such inspiring effect as has never been achieved in New York before. For the first scenes of the Emperor's flight, there is hardly more than a dark suggestion of the shadowy night-sky behind the gaunt trees. It blazes out into beauty when we reach the edge of a clearing and see the magnificent naked body of the emperor silhouetted against it. The concluding scenes of darker and darker terrors call less upon the sky, but in them all—particularly in the vision of the old chain gang from which Jones escaped by murder—the director and the artist have handled the lighting of the stage and its people quite as well as the lighting of the *Kuppelhorizont*.

To the skill of its producers and the lesson of the sky-dome, the Provincetown Players have added in this produc-

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tion a magnificent piece of acting. From Harlem they brought a colored player, Charles Gilpin, to impersonate the emperor. Mr. Gilpin had played a wise old negro in one of Ridgeley Torrence's plays produced some years ago by Robert E. Jones, and last season he was the humble negro Custis in *Abraham Lincoln*. In *The Emperor Jones* he shows not only a great power and a great imagination, in addition to his fine voice, but he displays an extraordinary versatility. It is a genuine impersonation, a being of flesh and blood and brain utterly different from the actor's other work. He carries the long soliloquy of the six scenes in the forest with extraordinary ease, building up steadily from his fright at the first Little Formless Fears, through his terror at the recurring visions of his crimes, to the horror that overwhelms him as the dim, buried, racial fears rise to carry him back to the auction block, the slave ship, and the voodoo gods of the Congo. Mr. Gilpin's performance is the crown to a play that opens up the imagination of the American theatre, and builds beauty and emotion out of the spiritual realities of one corner of our life.

### IV.

There is nothing of the imagination in *The First Year*. Within the limits of cheerful, optimistic Broadway, it is a true little comedy-study of youth in the middle class and the Middle West. Frank Craven, the excellent and uncompromising portrayer of homely, ludicrous, and bumptious young men, has followed his *Too Many Cooks* of some years ago with another picture of the troubles of young married couples. Here we have the lively-minded girl who wants to get away from the humdrum of her own small town. She will not marry into that sort of boredom. "I want to travel and see strange places," says she. And the awkward and not very handsome young fellow, who will do almost anything to win her, replies: "How will Joplin, Missouri, do?" Of such is *The First Year*, a pleasant pastiche of the mental foolishnesses and difficulties of this grave business of fusing two lives into a new one. It is never critical in the way of Zona Gale's *Lulu Bett*. It laughs at only the lesser difficul-



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ties and the lesser heroisms. Very typical is the absurdly rowdy and comic fight between the hero and what he imagines to be the ruiner of his home. It is thus that our heroic attitudes usually end. Mr. Craven, both as author and actor, with the aid of Winchell Smith as producer, has managed to keep a mood of kindly, comic observation running throughout the play. He has heightened and broadened the strain of homely character sketching, which makes the best in our popular American comedies, and he has deserted the crasser sentimentalities about love and business for a simple plot that lets us see a bit more truth without imperilling precious Broadway success by too great originality.

### V.

*The Bad Man* is a doubly surprising play. It has a good old startling melodrama plot with plenty of killings and rescues occurring at the most unexpected and appropriate times. Moreover, it startles its audience with keen and double-edged satire on the social habits of America and Mexico. Porter Emerson Browne, whose best-known work hitherto was *A Fool There Was*, has brought forth a colorful picturesque and exciting play in which a border bandit discusses the shortcomings of American life, and by his own mental attitude not only clarifies our own view of ourselves, but lets us see the oddities of life below the Rio Grande. Again and again come sharp and pungent pictures of our hide-bound society set off against the happy land to the south where all is happiness and freedom—"if you don't get shot."

The satire impinges on the plot at the point where the bandit, who has captured an American ranch and its inmates, recognizes one of them as the young man who saved his life a few revolutions ago. The youth has had to watch the cruelty of a husband of the stage-villain type towards his wife, whom the youth had loved before her marriage. The bandit observes the unhappiness of the boy. He will fix everything—leave it to him. And so in one of the most extraordinary scenes ever written by an American the bandit calmly shoots the husband. This Mexican substitute for

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divorce proves excellent in conception but a little halting in execution; for the husband is only wounded, comes to, and leads us on into a merry and bloodcurdling melodrama accompanied by a rapid fire of the bandit's philosophic reflections. Such a mingling of satire and excitement is a rare commodity on any stage.

The play is excellently set by Livingston Platt, well directed by Lester Lonergan, and quite extraordinarily acted by Holbrook Blinn as the bandit. Again we have an American player who can achieve physical as well as spiritual impersonation. In aspect, voice and mood, he creates a fresh and living character. The gusto of his performance is delightful.

### VI.

The three English plays of the season have been curiously different from one another. Even the two written by John Galsworthy have a violent dissimilarity. One of them, *The Mob*, is in the style of the older Galsworthy; it depicts a man fighting, lonely, hopelessly, and very nobly, against a human institution,—war and the mob that makes it. The other, *The Skin Game*, is filled with the personal conflict of two men of different classes. *The Mob* fails a little in its handling of its material, through reticence in a scene of sex-conflict and through utilizing for epilog a statue set up in future years to its martyred hero, a statue that naturally has to be explained by an electric-lighted tablet. *The Skin Game* is effective throughout but it uses more than one trick of dramaturgy that is alien to the soberer Galsworthy.

*The Mob* is the story of an English politician who is opposed to wars for imperial gain and who carries his opposition to the length of making "stop the war" speeches even after the conflict has begun. The consequences are desertion by friends, servants and wife, and finally his murder by a mob of men and women celebrating victory. The purpose of Mr. Galsworthy is—as his title shows—an attack on the mob, rather than upon imperialism. In this there seems to me to be a bit of loose-thinking akin to that in the end of *Strife*. At the close of that play of the conflict of ir-

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reconcilable leaders of capital and labor, the two parties, exhausted by the conflict, are forced to accept a compromise, which had been proposed at the beginning and rejected by both. I think I have seen no one point out that there was in this close a substantial, if costly, victory for the men; from the first the employers had refused any advance whatever and had fought for the *status quo ante*. In the end the men gained something, if not all they wished, and the employers lost. Mr. Galsworthy seems to me to be shooting similarly beside the mark in *The Mob*. Mobs solidify wars once they are started, and are venomous in their patriotism. But mobs do not begin wars. That is the business of diplomats and governments, merchants and newspaper proprietors. Mr. Galsworthy wrote *The Mob* in the spring of 1914. If he had written it four or five years later he might have seen something of the mob's innocent futility.

The first performance of *The Mob* in America, and perhaps the first production since it was produced at Miss Horniman's Manchester Repertory Theatre in March, 1914, was given at the courageous little Neighborhood Playhouse in New York's East Side. This season—or for the first half of it—the neighborhood boys and girls have given up the stage to a modest, but efficient paid company recruited outside. The performance of *The Mob* is considerably more than adequate. Considering the price of admission—a third to a half of what is charged on Broadway—the company, which includes Whitford Kane, Ian Maclaren and Dierdre Doyle, is unusually good.

### VII.

From the first opening moments *The Skin Game* is a much tenser play than any other Mr. Galsworthy has written. Tenser, because it launches us straight into personal conflict. We find the fine-fibred and considerate head of an old land-owning English family at loggerheads with a boorish, upstart manufacturer over the latter's breaking of his promise not to evict certain tenants upon land that he purchased from the aristocrat. The fight grows bitter; the new man buys properties whose use for manufacturing will ruin the home



Scene in the woods in the Provincetown Players' production of *The Emperor Jones*. Setting designed by Cleon Throckmorton and the producing staff of the Provincetown Players. (Photograph by Francis Bruguiere.)



Charles S. Gilpin in the title role of *The Emperor Jones* as produced by the Provincetown Players. (Photograph by Francis Bruguiere.)

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that the aristocrat's family has occupied for four centuries. Then the aristocrat's wife learns of a scandal in the past of the upstart's daughter, and uses it to drive them out. In the end, when the daughter has tried to commit suicide, the aristocrat cries:

"When we began this fight we had clean hands—are they clean now? What's gentility worth if it can't stand fire?"

7 Basil Dean, a London producer, who got his training in the repertory theatres of the provinces and who seems the nearest parallel that the commercial theatre of England now has to our own Arthur Hopkins, came to New York to mount *The Skin Game*, and gave it a generally effective production. To those who have read the play closely he seems to be erred only in the choice of types for the leading characters.

### VIII.

Shaw's *Heartbreak House*, which read most disappointingly in the printed volume, acts, like *The Great Catherine* and most of his later plays, far more engagingly than any one would have expected. It is still a largely incohesive mass of interesting speeches coming from interesting character studies. But instead of proving somewhat dull and rather nauseous in places, *Heartbreak House* becomes in actual performance a lively, highly amusing and finely thoughtful play. This is largely because of Shaw's very accurate sense of the theatre, but it depends also upon the excellent performance which the Theatre Guild gives the play. For *Heartbreak House* the Guild has considerably augmented its ranks, adding Effie Shannon to play Hesione Hushabye with much charm and humor, Albert Perry for the mad old sea captain, Lucille Watson and her smart staccato for Lady Utterword, and Elizabeth Risdon in a really distinguished performance of Ellie Dunn.

The total effect of the play is a disillusioned and bitter picture of the moral slackness of liberal England in the face of the war's challenge. *Heartbreak House*, "this silly house, this strangely happy house, this agonizing house, this house without foundation," goes on talking and flirt-

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ing while Horseback Hall creates war. Yet at the end of this more or less mystic war play in which no word of the actual conflict passes, it is a strange answer that meets the challenge: "Either out of that darkness some new creation will come to supplant us, as we have supplanted the animals, or the heavens will fall in thunder and destroy us." Out of the Beethoven thunder of a German aircraft comes a bomb, and it strikes—not Heartbreak House and its people, but that epitome of modern capitalism, Boss Mangan, lord of Horseback Hall.

### IX.

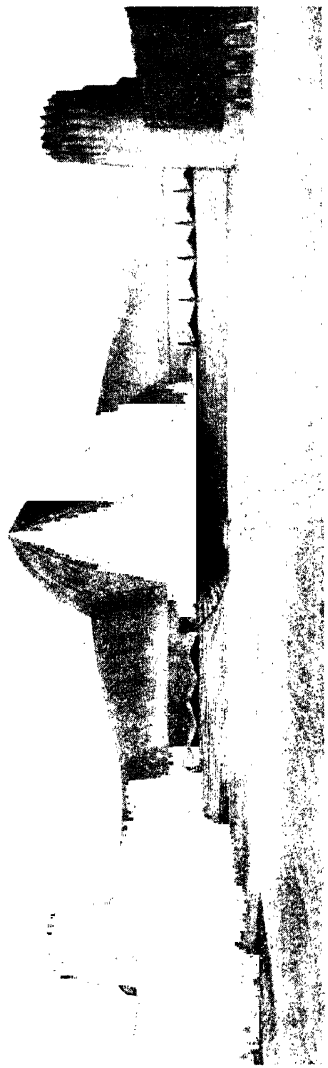
As the closing feature of the first four months of the new season, Arthur Hopkins has presented in English Jacob Ben-Ami, the creative force in the company which played so brilliantly last winter at the Jewish Art Theatre. The play is one which he has acted often in Yiddish, *Samson and Delilah*, a clever and tricky tragedy by the Danish critic, Sven Lange. It is a dexterous contrivance in which an elaborate and excellent study of the artistic temperament is set against conventional figures in a story that works out an ingenious parallel between the characters of the play's title and a playwright and his actress-wife, who represent Poetry betrayed to the Philistine Audience by the Theatre.

At the Jewish Art Theatre, the first act, in which the relations of the poet, his wife and his rival, are briskly and ironically stated, won much laughter. In English, partly through the personality of Pauline Lord, who plays the actress, the act is ineffective. But in the rehearsal of the poet's play, which makes the second act, Ben-Ami carries the discovery of his wife's love for a furniture dealer to a conclusion whose power swept the first-night audience almost to its feet. In the final act, with the fantastic madness and suicide of the poet, Ben-Ami achieves such a terrible picture of maniacal horror as I have never before seen on the stage. If Ben-Ami can go on from *Samson and Delilah* to translate into English the variety and power that he showed upon the Yiddish stage last season, he will be without rival in the English-speaking theatre.



*Steps toward a New Theatre Architecture.* We are reproducing in this issue photographs or drawings of seven theatres designed in a spirit entirely alien to the generally accepted traditions of theatre-building. In America we are developing an admirable group of artists in the field of modern stage decoration, we have four or five directors of notable achievement or promise, and recent months have given us cause for some confidence that we shall have playwrights and actors of equal caliber; but in the direction of theatre architecture there has been little progress away from the ideals and practice of ten years ago. Putting a really modernistic production into almost any of our new theatres is like putting a Gauguin or a Kandinsky into the ornate gilt frames that have survived as relics from the era of the aristocrats. But recently in Europe there has been a cropping-up of revolutionary ideas in playhouse design—not unrelated, perhaps, to the active “people’s theatre” movement. This magazine has put forward at times certain structural and economic aspects of the new theatre architecture, and it now has gathered this series of manifestations of a new aesthetic or decorative feeling in exterior design. As a group these pictures may suggest to most readers nothing more than a rather formless—even painful—reaction against the overdecorated “showhouse” style of building that had its origin in France and Italy and then spread throughout the Western world. To a few, however, there may be apparent throughout the series an insistence upon honesty of design as against embellishment, even a wilful casting-away of refinements, which stamps the architectural movement as definitely linked up with the widespread demand for a more honest stage not catering to a single social class, and with the general Bolshevik movement in art. In any case, study of the series cannot but be profitable in a country where theatre architecture has become stereotyped—and stereotyped in a mould cut for other times and other conditions. Above is the new building of the Berlin People’s Theatre (Berliner Volksbühne). Oskar Kaufmann, Architect. (For plans see the January, 1920, issue of this Magazine.) On the cover appears a sketch of Reinhardt’s Grosses Schauspielhaus in Berlin. Hans Poelzig, Architect. •

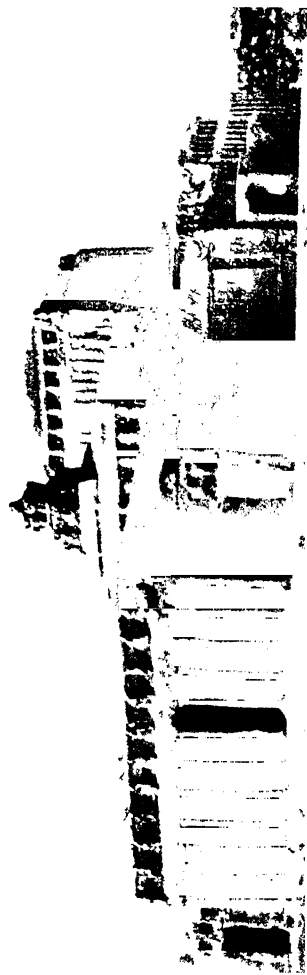




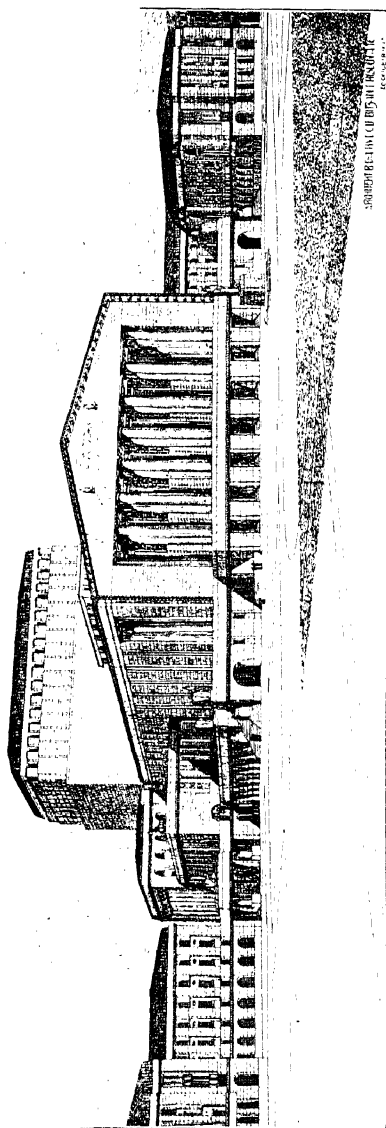
Design for a People's Theatre projected for Amsterdam, Holland.  
H. Th. Wijdeveld, Architect.



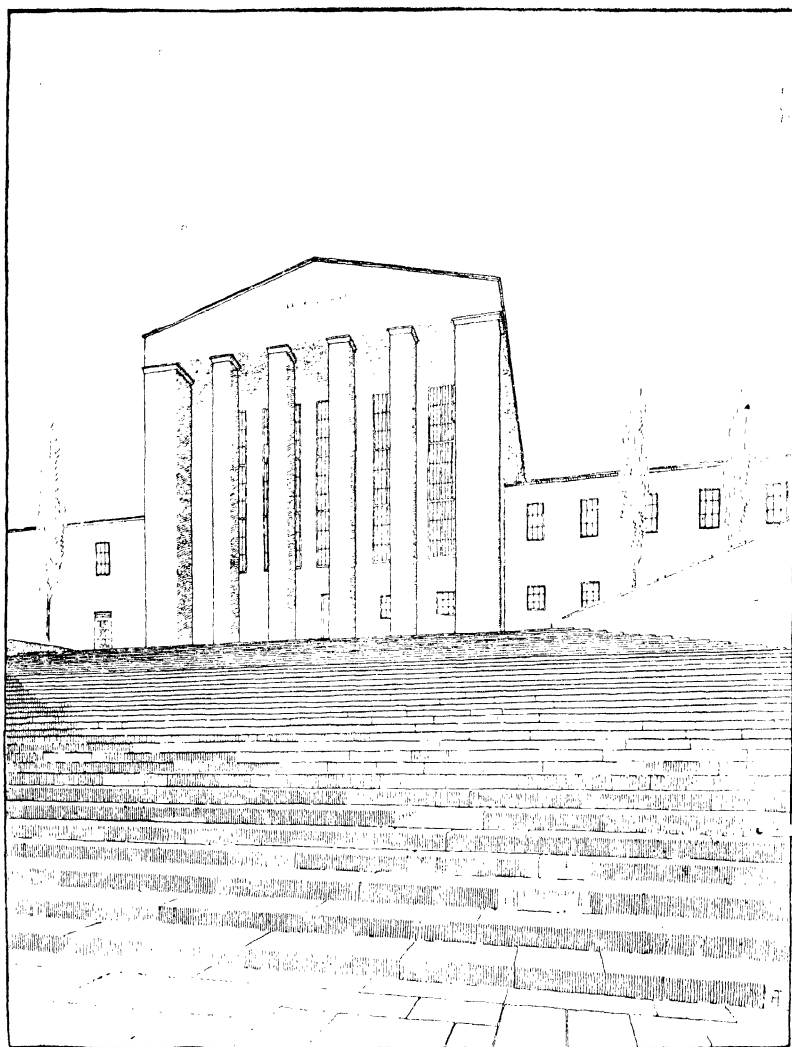
The "Werkbund Theater" at Cologne. Henri van de Velde,  
Architect.



Design for a new Opera House in Berlin competition of 1912  
H. Jassov und Fritz Architects



Design for a new Opera House in Berlin. Rudolf Bitzan, Architect. (This and the design on the opposite page are reproduced from *Die neuen Entwürfe, Berliner königliches Opernhaus*, published by Ernst Wasmuth, Berlin.)



One of the original sketches for the building of the Jaques-Dalcroze School for Eurhythmics, Hellerau, Dresden. Heinrich Tessenow, Architect.

# THE POST-D'ANNUNZIAN THEATRE

BY ISAAC GOLDBERG

IT is difficult, of course, to attempt anything like a definite, and therefore more or less static, appraisal of a theatre that finds itself in a transitional period of its history. Strong as is the temptation to date events in every sphere by the late war, we must avoid the easy error that looks upon all such conflicts as the immediate generators of radical change. Without a doubt the war will ultimately operate in the direction of a marked re-orientation of drama in Germany and Italy, let us say; yet it must be borne in mind that both the expressionist play as today written and performed in Germany, and the Italian novelties of recent days, had received their impulse before the war,—had been, perhaps, symptoms in art of those same elements which in economic life bred the four-year catastrophe. In Italy, then, it may be said that the new currents of the drama were interrupted, rather than created by the war. The need of change had long been felt; a strong reaction had set in against that cult of woman and that worship of the past which is symbolized in the striking figure of D'Annunzio. Such acrimonious critics as Giovanni Papini, though breaking loose from the restricted futurism of a Marinetti, provided brilliant leadership in the fight for a dynamic conception of Italian life. Glance at the salient aspects of the "new" attempts in contemporary Italian drama and you come upon material that was being shaped before the war began. Marinetti's "synthetic" drama, though not launched definitely before 1915, was inherent in the very fabric of the futuristic revolt of 1909; Ricciardi's "theatre of color" was developed as far back as 1906; the "grotesque" theatre, though perhaps hastened by the popular reaction to the horrors of the war, was in part a belated echo of the Grand Guignol.

We may regard the "new" theatre in Italy, then, on the

one hand as a powerful reaction against the past, and on the other as a self-conscious attempt to create a genuinely national drama. We have to do, not with a school, in the narrow literary sense, but with an individualistic band associated in a common purpose. The writers and producers have not only the inertia of the public to contend with, but themselves as well. The discerning critic Borgese has only recently pointed out that the nation suffers from a notion that reality is an inferior artistic material,—from what he terms a “mania for the sublime.” As a result, not only is Italian poetry inclined to err in the direction of an exaggerated visionary character, but the very spirit of reality suffers. Hence there are relatively few good novels and good plays. “The Italian production of novels is insufficient to supply the circulating libraries, and the supply of native drama is not enough to cover the posters.” If the aim of the newer spirits is to broaden the Italian writers’ field of vision, to bring them closer to the people and to everyday life, to achieve the intellectual independence of the peninsula, they must themselves be on guard against their fear of the poetic tradition, which leads them to believe that every play must have a dash of the “sublime” or the “poetry of things,” lest it degenerate into a merely prosaic affair. There was even a tendency to call a dramatic production anything but a play,—to dub it a “confession,” a “fable,” an “adventure,” a “grotesque,”—so long as the routine word drama was avoided. (Since Borgese wrote this vital bit of criticism, more than one prominent dramatist has wrecked his piece upon just this rock of false poeticism.) So long as the Italian dramatist fears reality, from a mistaken idea as to its artistic availability, so long will there be an inartistic mingling of two elements which, each in its place, is the breath of art.

## II

Of the actual attempts to establish new methods we may select four for brief comment. These are: the “teatro grotesco,” Scardaoni’s presentation of a “new” dramatic

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unity, Marinetti's "synthetic" drama with its queer list of designations, and Ricciardi's "teatro del colore." A diversified list, but, with the exception of Marinetti's contribution, representing a fairly tolerant attitude toward one another.

The term grotesque, as applied to the "teatro grottesco," should be interpreted more fully than its English connotation. In Italian usage it is broad enough to include certain subtleties that we would be inclined to call intellectual, or cerebral. With the progress of the war was noted an increasing desire for laughter on the part of the play-going public, which, in Italy, forms a very large proportion of the whole. Not only was this desire displayed by the common people, but by the upper circles, who, previous to the conflict, had regaled themselves with Bracco, Butti, D'Annunzio, Benelli. It is interesting to note that coincident with this alteration in the public taste came the rising popularity of Bernard Shaw in the peninsula; some have regarded him even as a cause rather than a concomitant. There, is, in the "grotesque" play's audience, a desire to laugh today at what it wept over yesterday.

The first really ripe product of the grotesque school was given as far back as 1915, in *The Mask and the Face*. The plot recounts the tragedy of a husband whose conjugal rights have been invaded. His view of such an infringement is that of the "point of honor" which for centuries shrieked upon the Spanish stage; it is his duty to slay his faithless wife. His courage, however, is not equal to his sense of duty. Whereupon he conspires with his own wife to have it appear that he has slain her! The critics discovered in the play a bitter satire upon "our contemporary powerlessness to live," and the only fault generally charged against it was an excessively literary character. Even more "grotesque" is Fausto Maria Martini's pathological one-act drama entitled *Ridi, Pagliaccio*, in which a clown, who with his antics nightly brushes away the cares of his audiences, is himself a hypochondriac requiring the care of a psychiatrist. In the printed version he is dismissed with



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the pity of some fellow sufferers from nervous ailments; in the stage version he commits suicide. In such a play as this may be discovered the touch of the Grand Guignol adapted to intellectual as well as to physical shudders.

Scardaoni's theory of a new unity represents an almost anti-theoretical attitude toward the drama and the playhouse. The man is an ardent disciple of beauty, and though finding in the contemporary Italian theatre the identical faults which are discovered by the upholders of the "grotesque" and the "futurist" theatre, he yet reaches utterly different conclusions. The theatre, to Scardaoni, is a temple for the worship of beauty. It must not on the one hand be defiled by problems, nor, on the other, be clouded by too much poetic incense. In other words, away with Bracco and Butti, as well as with D'Annunzio and Benelli. In the ecstatic words that conclude his essay upon a new "Theory of Tragedy," he writes:

The stage is an altar upon which Beauty consecrates its rites, and Beauty is the religion of life.

All the rites of all religions were originally tragic pantomime; metaphysical deviations and false divinities impeded development and destroyed values.

Without tragic celebration no rites exist, and without rites there is no religion.

Whence it appears that the religion of Beauty is supreme.

The temples became theatres; it is now time for the theatres to become temples.

It should be kept in mind that the effects of this doctrine are limited by the fact that it is a matter of print rather than exemplification in a play that has been produced and made an impression. At the same time, although there is little essentially new in the theory advanced, there is something more than a mere addition to terminology in Scardaoni's "dramatic polyphonism." He would, for instance,

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deny supremacy even to the dialogue upon the stage. Just as we have discarded such lay figures as hero, villain and the rest of the category, so does Scardaoni foresee a drama in which even dialogue has been deprived of its supremacy and been made to fuse with the other elements of the play—the pauses of silence, the words, the gestures, lights, colors,—all of which will combine to establish a “cosmic zone.”

Only recently Marinetti has published a collection of his futurist plays, exemplifying the synthetic drama that, he hopes, will compete even with the “movies” upon their own ground. The general bases and aims of the Futurists already make an old story; as applied to the stage, their constructive efforts are far more interesting than effective, though they are by no means to be dismissed as the irresponsible creations of a brood of cranks. Those plays are above all, short; they dump all conventional technique into the ocean of the past; they utilize inanimate objects as the chief characters of the action; they telescope time and space; at times they abolish all speech, depending solely upon a certain disposition of the scenery and the lighting effects. For such new forms, new names; hence we have the “anti-logical compenetrations,” the “drama of objects,” the “simultaneity,” and other terms quite as intriguing. Yet on the whole it may be said that these plays possess novelty of emphasis rather than of substance. As a criticism of the prevalent technique they contain valuable hints, though in exaggerated form; some of them would repay production by the non-commercial theatre, and invite experiments in staging, lights and stylization. Dramatists have been working independently toward some of the results here aimed at by Marinetti; they have, however, been content to subordinate those elements which Marinetti would make the be-all and end-all of his labors. And as if to make us understand that none of us is perfect, the chief play presented in the collection, *Elettricità Sessuale* (*Sexual Electricity*) reads almost like a conventional piece today, with more than a relic of “ancient” technique that Marinetti may imagine he has utterly forsaken. Yet at bottom

of the futurist reaction against contemporary drama lies a valid striving for the free personality in art, a yearning for ever-widening horizons, a horror of stagnation. It holds the mirror before our inner as well as our outer lives,—a distorting mirror, however.

Achille Ricciardi, theorist of the "theatre of color," is, as an innovator, the most modest of those that we consider here. He does not advance his new stage-technique as a method intended to supplant all existing schemes; he presents his novelty after a thorough study of color and the functions of color through the ages, on the stage and off. His book, "*Il Teatro del Colore*," though printed only the previous year (dedicated to D'Annunzio), was conceived as early as 1906, and it is not without ill-repressed dissatisfaction that the author saw his ideas appropriated by Sem Benelli and mentioned in the Italian press as emanating from that source. Briefly stated the theory asks the utilization of color not solely as a decorative element, but as a psychological agent. "Even the color of the clothes determines the psychology of the dramatic person. . . . In the development of the drama the color of the costumes follows the ascent of the emotions. Every event takes place in a special atmosphere, with its individual color." (Wasn't it Remy de Gourmont who cautioned us to choose our mates with fastidious regard for color combinations, and to beware especially of the woman whose favorite hue was violet?) Ricciardi believes that the best field for the application of this theory is the fantastic play; both he and Scardaoni have learned not a little from the ancient Greeks, who have such a habit of peering from behind the doors of modernity.

### III

Two, in particular, of the contemporary dramatists are deserving of wide recognition outside of their native country,—Luigi Pirandello and Luigi Ercole Morselli. Pirandello, born in Sicily, in 1867, has achieved note as novelist, humorist, poet and playwright. His novel *The Late Mat-*

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*tia Pascal*, a spirited, frank, Boccacesque piece of work, won him high praise and caused him to be considered as one of the few hopes for the contemporary Italian novel; his dramas, which brought him similar attention from students of the Italian theatre, seem to indicate the influence of such playwrights as Bracco, Butti, and Bernard Shaw. (The Shavian influence is disputed, but I believe it is there.) His early work did not reveal him as a candidate for "grotesque" honors; the early one-act piece *Sicilian Limes*,—a touching study in love values, deftly done, is quite conventional. From this to such excellent pieces as *Se Non Così (If Not Thus)*, in which the author busies himself with social and domestic problems, is not so far a step as from that play to his newest manner, as exemplified, for instance, in *Così È, Se Vi Pare (It's So, If You Think It Is)*. Here we have a hilarious, yet thoroughly intellectual treatment of mankind's mad search for truth. Is there such a thing as Truth? Or, at least, a sole Truth? Are there not as many truths as there are sincere beliefs in them? The humor is bitter, at times grim; writers like this make excellent reading, and Pirandello's success upon the stage speaks well for Italian audiences. His very latest work seems not to have maintained the high standards of this play, and to have relapsed into a certain laxity.

Morselli's *Glauco* was the surprise and the event of its season. Some years before, his other play, *Orione*, likewise built around the modernization of a Greek myth, had been received with varying favor. With *Glauco*, however, his name was definitely established among the first dramatists of Italy. Papini went so far as to hail him as the greatest living writer of tragedy. Here, at last, was the long awaited spirit who could meet D'Annunzio and Benelli (Papini's pet antipathies) upon their own ground. And in truth, *Glauco* is a strikingly successful transformation of ancient legend into contemporary symbol. It achieves its effects without reliance upon scenic trappings and swollen rhetoric; its language is simple, melodious, instinct with genuine, unaffected poetry; its action is concise, swift, beautiful; its

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meaning, clear. His *Orion* had represented the futility of man's power before the face of death; *Glauco* represents the futility of power's companion, glory, as opposed to the joy of love. In each play the mythical protagonist is cheated, at the last moment, of his sweetheart. Orion, earth-born and defying all earth's creatures, after slaying the monster of the forest, dies from the sting of a scorpion that he deems beneath his notice. Glaucus, achieving his vast dreams, wins his fame at the cost of Scylla's life. The parallelism of the symbols is evident in a certain similarity between the plays.

Morselli promises us two new plays, shortly to appear: *Dafne e Cloe* and *Belfagor*. From a letter sent by him to "L'Italia Che Scrive" we learn such divers facts as, that he was born at Pesaro in 1883; that he has made long journeys to Africa and to America; that he is a firm believer in the printed play; that he is not prolific. "I have surely created a little beauty and a little art," he says. "But this is not my true ambition. I confess to you that it would seem to me like having wasted my time if, out of an experience so saturated with sorrow I should not have learned some of those miraculous words which soften the human heart and persuade it to be better. I believe firmly that art was born for this, and that for this reason it is a thing divine." Yet nothing could be farther from preachiness and "uplift" than the peculiarly contemporary tragedy that Morselli has fashioned from the hint of the ancients.

# THE EMPEROR JONES

BY EUGENE G. O'NEILL

*Characters:*

BRUTUS JONES, *Emperor.*

HENRY SMITHERS, *A Cockney Trader.*

AN OLD NATIVE WOMAN.

LEM, *A Native Chief.*

SOLDIERS, *Adherents of Lem.*

*The Little Formless Fears; Jeff; The Negro Convicts;  
The Prison Guard; The Planters; The Auctioneer;  
The Slaves; The Congo Witch-Doctor; The Cro-  
codile God.*

*The action of the play takes place on an island in the  
West Indies as yet un-self-determined by White  
Marines. The form of native government is, for the  
time being, an Empire.*

SCENE ONE: *The audience chamber in the palace of the Emperor—a spacious, high-ceilinged room with bare, white-washed walls. The floor is of white tiles. In the rear, to the left of center, a wide archway giving out on a portico with white pillars. The palace is evidently situated on high ground, for beyond the portico nothing can be seen but a vista of distant hills, their summits crowned with thick groves of palm trees. In the right wall, center, a smaller arched doorway leading to the living quarters of the palace. The room is bare of furniture with the exception of one huge chair made of uncut wood which stands at center, its back to rear. This is very apparently the Emperor's throne. It is painted a dazzling, eye-smiting scarlet. There is a brilliant orange cushion on the seat and another smaller one is placed on the floor to serve as a footstool. Strips of matting, dyed scarlet, lead from the foot of the throne to the two entrances.*

*It is late afternoon but the sunlight still blazes yellowly beyond the portico and there is an oppressive burden of exhausting heat in the air.*

*As the curtain rises, a native negro woman sneaks in cautiously from the entrance on the right. She is very old, dressed in cheap calico, bare-footed, a red bandana handkerchief covering all but a few stray wisps of white hair. A bundle bound in colored cloth is carried*

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*over the shoulder on the end of a stick. She hesitates beside the doorway, peering back as if in extreme dread of being discovered. Then she begins to glide noiselessly, a step at a time, toward the doorway in the rear. At this moment, Smithers appears beneath the portico.*

*Smithers is a tall, stoop-shouldered man about forty. His bald head, perched on a long neck with an enormous Adam's apple, looks like an egg. The tropics have tanned his naturally pasty face with its small, sharp features to a sickly yellow, and Native Rum has painted his pointed nose to a startling red. His little, washy-blue eyes are red-rimmed and dart about him like a ferret's. His expression is one of unscrupulous meanness, cowardly and dangerous. His attitude toward Jones is that of one who will give vent to a nourished grudge against all superiority—as far as he dares. He is dressed in a worn riding suit of dirty white drill, puttees, spurs, and wears a white cork helmet. A cartridge belt with an automatic revolver is around his waist. He carries a riding whip in his hand. He sees the woman and stops to watch her suspiciously. Then, making up his mind, he steps quickly on tiptoe into the room. The woman, looking back over her shoulder continually, does not see him until it is too late. When she does, Smithers springs forward and grabs her firmly by the shoulder. She struggles to get away, fiercely but silently.*

SMITHERS [*tightening his grasp—roughly*]. Easy! None o' that, me birdie. You can't wriggle out now. I got me 'ooks on yer.

WOMAN [*seeing the uselessness of struggling, gives away to frantic terror, and sinks to the ground, embracing his knees supplicatingly*]. No tell him! No tell him, Mister!

SMITHERS [*with great curiosity*]. Tell 'im? [*Then scornfully*]. Oh, you mean 'is bloomin' Majesty. What's the gaime, any 'ow? What are you sneakin' away for? Been stealin' a bit, I s'pose. [*He taps her bundle with his riding whip significantly*].

WOMAN [*shaking her head vehemently*]. No, me no steal.

SMITHERS. Bloody liar! But tell me what's up. There's somethin' funny goin' on. I smelled it in the air first thing I got up this mornin'. You blacks are up to some devilment. This palace of 'is is like a bleedin' tomb. Where's all the 'ands? [*The woman keeps sullenly silent. Smithers raises his whip threateningly.*] Ow, yer won't, won't yer? I'll show yer what's what.

WOMAN [*coweringly*]. I tell, Mister. You no hit. They go—all go. [*She makes a sweeping gesture toward the hills in the distance*].

SMITHERS. Run away—to the 'ills?

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WOMAN. Yes, Mister. Him Emperor—Great Father— [*She touches her forehead to the floor with a quick mechanical jerk*]. Him sleep after eat. Then they go—all go. Me old woman. Me left only. Now me go too.

SMITHERS [*his astonishment giving way to an immense mean satisfaction*]. Ow! So that's the ticket! Well, I know bloody well wot's in the air—when they runs orf to the 'ills. The tom-tom 'll be thumping out there bloomin' soon. [*With extreme vindictiveness*]. And I'm bloody glad of it, for one! Serve 'im right! Puttin' on airs, the stinkin' nigger! 'Is Majesty! Gawd blimey! I only 'opes I'm there when they takes 'im out to shoot 'im. [*Suddenly*.] 'E's still 'ere all right, ain't 'e?

WOMAN. Yes. Him sleep.

SMITHERS. 'E's bound to find out soon as 'e wakes up. 'E's cunnin' enough to know when 'is time's come. [*He goes to the doorway on right and whistles shrilly with his fingers in his mouth. The old woman springs to her feet and runs out of the doorway, rear. Smithers goes after her, reaching for his revolver.*] Stop or I'll shoot! [*Then stopping—indifferently.*] Pop orf then, if yer like, yer black cow! [*He stands in the doorway, looking after her.*]

[*Jones enters from the right. He is a tall, powerfully-built, full blooded negro of middle age. His features are typically negroid, yet there is something decidedly distinctive about his face—an underlying strength of will, a hardy, self-reliant confidence in himself that inspires respect. His eyes are alive with a keen, cunning intelligence. In manner, he is shrewd, suspicious, evasive. He wears a light blue uniform coat, sprayed with brass buttons, heavy gold chevrons on his shoulders, gold braid on the collar, cuffs, etc. His pants are bright red with a light blue stripe down the side. Patent leather laced boots with brass spurs, and a belt with a long-barreled, pearl-handled revolver in a holster complete his make up. Yet there is something not altogether ridiculous about his grandeur. He has a way of carrying it off.*]

JONES [*not seeing anyone—greatly irritated and blinking sleepily—shouts*]. Who dare whistle dat way in my palace? Who dare wake up de Emperor? I'll git de hide frayed off some o' you niggers sho'!

SMITHERS [*showing himself—in a manner half-afraid and half-defiant*]. It was me whistled to yer. [*As Jones frowns angrily.*] I got news for yer.



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JONES [*putting on his suavest manner which fails to cover up his contempt for the white man*]. Oh, it's you, Mister Smithers. [*He sits down on his throne with easy dignity.*] What news you got to tell me?

SMITHERS [*coming close to enjoy his discomfort*]. Don't you notice nothin' funny today?

JONES [*coldly*]. Funny? No, I ain't perceived nothin' of de kind!

SMITHERS. Then you ain't so foxy as I thought you was. Where's all your court— [*Sarcastically.*] the Generals and the Cabinet Ministers and all?

JONES [*imperturbably*]. Where dey mostly runs to, minute I closes my eyes—dinkin' rum and talkin' big down in de town. [*Sarcastically.*] How come you don't know dat? Ain't you sousin' with 'em most every day?

SMITHERS [*stung but pretending indifference—with a wink*]. That's part of the day's work. I got ter—ain't I—in my business?

JONES [*contemptuously*]. Yo' business!

SMITHERS [*imprudently enraged*]. Gawd blimey, you was glad enough for me ter take you in on it when you landed here first. You didn' 'ave no'igh and mighty airs in them days!

JONES [*his hand going to his revolver like a flash—menacingly*]. Talk polite, white man! Talk polite, you heah me! I'm boss heah now, is you forgettin'? [*The Cockney seems about to challenge this last statement with the facts, but something in the other's eyes holds and coves him.*]

SMITHERS [*in a cowardly whine*]. No 'arm meant, old top.

JONES [*condescendingly*]. I accepts yo' apology. [*Lets his hand fall from his revolver.*] No use'n you rakin' up ole times. What I was den is one thing. What I is now 's another. You didn't let me in on yo' crooked work out o' no kind feelin' dat time. I done de dirty work fo' you—and most o' de brain work, too, fo' dat matter—and I was wu'th money to you, dat's de reason.

SMITHERS. Well, blimey, I give yer a start, didn't I—when no one else would. I wasn't afraid to hire yer like the rest was—'count of the story about your breakin' jail back in the States.

JONES. No, you didn't have no s'cuse to look down on me fo' dat. You been in jail yo'self more'n once.

SMITHERS [*furiously*]. It's a lie! [*Then trying to pass it off by an attempt at scorn*]. Garn! Who told yer that fairy tale?

JONES. Dey's some things I ain't got to be tole. I kin see 'em in folk's eyes. [*Then after a pause—meditatively.*] Yes, you sho' give me a start. And it didn't take long from dat time to git dese

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fool woods' niggers right where I wanted dem. [*With pride.*] From stowaway to Emperor in two years! Dat's goin' some!

SMITHERS [*with curiosity*]. And I bet you got er pile o' money 'id safe someplace.

JONES [*with satisfaction*]. I sho' has! And it's in a foreign bank where no pusson don't ever get it out but me no matter what come. You don't s'pose I was holdin' down dis Emperor job for de glory in it, did you? Sho'! De fuss and glory part of it, dat's only to turn de heads o' de low-flung, bush niggers dat's here. Dey wants de big circus show for deir money. I gives it to 'em an' I gits de money. [*With a grin.*] De long green, dat's me every time! [*Then rebukingly.*] But you ain't got no kick agin me, Smithers. I'se paid you back all you done for me many times. Ain't I pertected you and winked at all de crooked tradin' you been doin' right out in de broad day. Sho' I has—and me makin' laws to stop it at de same time! [*He chuckles.*]

SMITHERS [*grinning*]. But, meanin' no 'arm, you been grabbin' right and left yourself, ain't you? Look at the taxes you've put on 'em! Blimey! You've squeezed 'em dry!

JONES [*chuckling*]. No dey ain't *all* dry yet. I'se still heah, ain't I?

SMITHERS [*smiling at his secret thought*]. They're dry right now, you'll find out. [*Changing the subject abruptly.*] And as for me breaking laws, you've broke 'em all yerself just as fast as yer made 'em.

JONES. Ain't I de Emperor? De laws don't go for him. [*Judicially.*] You heah what I tells you, Smithers. Dere's little stealin' like you does, and dere's big stealin' like I does. For de little stealin' dey gits you in jail soon or late. For de big stealin' dey makes you Emperor and puts you in de Hall o' Fame when you croaks. [*Reminiscently.*] If dey's one thing I learns in ten years on de Pullman ca's listenin' to de white quality talk, it's dat same fact. And when I gits a chance to use it I winds up Emperor in two years.

SMITHERS [*unable to repress the genuine admiration of the small fry for the large*]. Yes, you turned the bleedin' trick, all right. Blimey, I never seen a bloke 'as 'ad the bloomin' luck you 'as.

JONES [*severely*]. Luck? What you mean—luck?

SMITHERS. I suppose you'll say as that swank about the silver bullet ain't luck—and that was what first got the fool blacks on yer side the time of the revolution, wasn't it?

JONES [*with a laugh*]. Oh, dat silver bullet! Sho' was luck! But I makes dat luck, you heah? I loads de dice! Yessuh! When

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dat murderin' nigger ole Lem hired to kill me takes aim ten feet away and his gun misses fire and I shoots him dead, what you heah me say?

SMITHERS. You said yer'd got a charm so's no lead bullet'd kill yer. You was so strong only a silver bullet could kill yer, you told 'em. Blimey, wasn't that swank for yer—and plain, fat-'eaded luck?

JONES [*proudly*]. I got brains and uses 'em quick. Dat ain't luck.

SMITHERS. Yer knew they wasn't 'ardly liable to get no silver bullets. And it was luck 'e didn't 'it you that time.

JONES [*laughing*]. And dere all dem fool bush niggers was kneelin' down and bumpin' deir heads on de ground like I was a miracle out o' de Bible. Oh Lawd, from dat time on I has dem all eatin' out of my hand. I cracks de whip and dey jumps through.

SMITHERS [*with a sniff*]. Yankee bluff done it.

JONES. Ain't a man's talkin' big what makes him big—long as he makes folks believe it. So', I talks large when I ain't got nothin' to back it up, but I ain't talkin' wild just de same. I knows I kin fool 'em—I *knows* it—and dat's backin' enough fo' my game. And ain't I got to learn deir lingo and teach some of dem English befo' I kin talk to 'em? Ain't dat wirk? You ain't never learned any word er it, Smithers, in de ten years you been heah, dough yo' knows it's money in yo' pocket tradin' wid 'em if you does. But yo' too shiftless to take de trouble.

SMITHERS [*flushing*]. Never mind about me. What's this I've 'eard about yer really 'avin' a silver bullet moulded for yourself?

JONES. It's playin' out my bluff. I has de silver bullet moulded and I tells 'em when de time comes I kills myself wid it. I tells 'em dat's 'cause I'm de on'y man in de world big enuff to git me. No use'n deir tryin'. And dey falls down and bumps deir heads. [*He laughs.*] I does dat so's I kin take a walk in peace widout no jealous nigger gunnin' at me from behind de trees.

SMITHERS [*astonished*]. Then you 'ad it made—'onest?

JONES. Sho' did. Heah she be. [*He takes out his revolver, breaks it, and takes the silver bullet out of one chamber.*] Five lead an' dis silver baby at de last. Don't she shine pretty? [*He holds it in his hand, looking at it admiringly, as if strangely fascinated.*]

SMITHERS. Let me see. [*Reaches out his hand for it.*]

JONES [*harshly*]. Keep yo' hands whar de b'long, white man. [*He replaces it in the chamber and puts the revolver back on his hip.*]

SMITHERS [*snarling*]. Gawd blimey! Think I'm a bleedin' thief, you would.

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JONES. No. 'Tain't dat. I knows you'se scared to steal from me. On'y I ain't 'lowin' nary body to touch dis baby. She's my rabbit's foot.

SMITHERS [*sneering*]. A bloomin' charm, wot? [*Venemously.*] Well, you'll need all the bloody charms you 'as before long, s' elp me!

JONES [*judicially*]. Oh, I'se good for six months yit 'fore dey gits sick o' my game. Den, when I sees trouble comin', I makes my getaway.

SMITHERS. Ho! You got it all planned, ain't yer?

JONES. I ain't no fool. I knows dis Emperor's time is sho't. Dat why I make hay when de sun shine. Was you thinkin' I'se aimin' to hold down dis job for life? No, suh! What good is gittin' money if you stays back in dis raggedy country? I wants action when I spends. And when I sees dese niggers gittin' up deir nerve to tu'n me out, and I'se got all de money in sight, I resigns on de spot and beats it quick.

SMITHERS. Where to?

JONES. None o' yo' business.

SMITHERS. Not back to the bloody States, I'll lay my oath.

JONES [*suspiciously*]. Why don't I? [*Then with an easy laugh.*] You mean 'count of dat story 'bout me breakin' from jail back dere? Dat's all talk.

SMITHERS [*skeptically*]. Ho, yes!

JONES [*sharply*]. You ain't 'sinuatin' I'se a liar, is you?

SMITHERS [*hastily*]. No, Gawd strike me! I was only thinkin' o' the bloody lies you told the blacks 'ere about killin' white men in the States.

JONES [*angered*]. How come dey're lies?

SMITHERS. You'd 'ave been in jail if you 'ad, wouldn't yer then? [*With venom.*] And from what I've 'eard, it ain't 'ealthy for a black to kill a white man in the States. They burn 'em in oil, don't they?

JONES [*with cool deadliness*]. You mean lynchin' 'd scare me? Well, I tells you, Smithers, maybe I does kill one white man back dere. Maybe I does. • And maybe I kills another right heah 'fore long if he don't look out.

SMITHERS [*trying to force a laugh*]. I was on'y spoofin' yer. Can't yer take a joke? And you was just sayin' you'd never been in jail.

JONES [*in the same tone—slightly boastful*]. Maybe I goes to jail dere for gettin' in an argument wid razors ovah a crap game.

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Maybe I gits twenty years when dat colored man die. Maybe I gits in 'nother argument wid de prison guard was overseer o' us when we're walkin' de roads. Maybe he hits me wid a whip an' I splits his head wid a shovel an' runs away an' files de chain off my leg an' gits away safe. Maybe I does all dat an' maybe I don't. It's a story I tells you so's you knows I'se de kind of man dat if you evah repeats one word of it, I ends yo' stealin' on dis yearth mighty damn quick!

SMITHERS [*terrified*]. Think I'd peach on yer? Not me! Ain't I always been yer friend?

JONES [*suddenly relaxing*]. Sho' you has—and you better be.

SMITHERS [*recovering his composure—and with it his malice*]. And just to show yer I'm yer friend, I'll tell yer that bit o' news I was goin' to.

JONES. Go ahead! Shoot de piece. Must be bad news from de happy way you look.

SMITHERS [*warningly*]. Maybe it's gettin' time for you to resign—with that bloomin' silver bullet, wot? [*He finishes with a mocking grin.*]

JONES [*puzzled*]. What's dat you say? Talk plain.

SMITHERS. Ain't noticed any of the guards or servants about the place today, I 'aven't.

JONES [*carelessly*]. Dey're all out in de garden sleepin' under de trees. When I sleeps, dey sneaks a sleep, too, and I pretends I never suspicions it. All I got to do is to ring de bell an' dey come flyin', makin' a bluff dey was wukin' all de time.

SMITHERS [*in the same mocking tone*]. Ring the bell now an' you'll bloody well see what I means.

JONES [*startled to alertness, but preserving the same careless tone*]. Sho' I rings. [*He reaches below the throne and pulls out a big common dinner bell which is painted the same vivid scarlet as the throne. He rings this vigorously—then stops to listen. Then he goes to both doors, rings again, and looks out.*]

SMITHERS [*watching him with malicious satisfaction—after a pause—mockingly*]. The bloody ship is sinkin' an' the bleedin' rats 'as slung their 'ooks.

JONES [*in a sudden fit of anger flings the bells clattering into a corner*]. Low-flung, woods' niggers! [*Then catching Smither's eye on him, he controls himself and suddenly bursts into a low chuckling laugh*]. Reckon I overplays my hand dis once! A man can't take de pot on a bob-tailed flush all de time. Was I sayin' I'd sit in six months mo'? Well, I'se changed my mind den. I cashes in and resigns de job of Emperor right dis minute.

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SMITHERS [*with real admiration*]. Blimey, but you're a cool bird, and no mistake.

JONES. No use'n fussin'. When I knows de game's up I kisses it goodbye widout no long waits. Dey've all run off to de hills, ain't dey?

SMITHERS. Yes—every bleedin' man jack of 'em.

JONES. Den de revolution is at de post. And de Emperor better git his feet smokin' up de trail. [*He starts for the door in rear*].

SMITHERS. Goin' out to look for your 'orse? Yer won't find any. They steals the 'orses first thing. Mine was gone when I went for 'im this mornin' That's wot first give me a suspicion of wot was up.

JONES [*alarmed for a second, scratches his head, then philosophically*]. Well, den I hoofs it. Feet, do yo' duty! [*He pulls out a gold watch and looks at it*]. Three-thuty. Sundown's at six-thuty or dereabouts. [*Puts his watch back—with cool confidence*]. I got plenty o' time to make it easy.

SMITHERS. Don't be so bloomin' sure of it. They'll be after you 'ot and 'eavy. Ole Lem is at the bottom o' this business an' 'e 'ates you like 'ell. 'E'd rather do for you than eat 'is dinner, 'e would!

JONES [*scornfully*]. Dat fool no-count nigger! Does you think I'se scared o' him? I stands him on his thick head more'n once befo' dis, and I does it again if he come in my way— [*fiercely*]. And dis time I leave him a dead nigger fo' sho'!

SMITHERS. You'll 'ave to cut through the big forest—an' these blacks 'ere can sniff and follow a trail in the dark like 'ounds. You'd 'ave to 'ustle to get through that forest in twelve hours even if you knew all the bloomin' trails like a native.

JONES [*with indignant scorn*]. Look-a-heah, white man! Does you think I'm a natural bo'n fool? Give me credit fo' havin' some sense, fo' Lawd's sake! Don't you s'pose I'se looked ahead and made sho' of all de chances? I'se gone out in dat big forest, pretendin' to hunt, so many times dat I knows it high an' low like a book. I could go through on dem trails wid my eyes shut. [*With great contempt*]. Think dese ig'nerent bush niggers dat don't got brains enuff to know deir own names even can catch Brutus Jones? Huh, I s'pects not! Not on yo' life! Why, man, de white men went after me wid bloodhounds where I come from an' I jes' laughs at 'em. It's a shame to fool dese black trash around heah, dey're so easy. You watch me, man'. I'll make dem look sick. I will. I'll be 'cross de plain to de edge of de forest by time dark comes.

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Once in de woods in de night, dey got a swell chance o' findin dis baby! Dawn tomorrow I'll be out at de oder side and on de coast whar dat French gun boat is stayin'. She picks me up, take me to the Martinique when she go dar, and dere I is safe wid a mighty big bankroll in my jeans. It's easy as rollin' off a log.

SMITHERS [*maliciously*]. But s'posin' somethin' 'appens wrong an' they do nab yer?

JONES [*decisively*]. Dey don't.—Dat's de answer.

SMITHERS. But, just for argyments sake,—what'd you do?

JONES [*frowning*]. I'se got five lead bullets in dis gun good enuff fo' common bush niggers—an' after dat I got de silver bullet left to cheat 'em out o' gittin' me.

SMITHERS [*jeeringly*]. Ho, I was fergettin' that silver bullet. You'll bump yourself orf in style, won't yer? Blimey!

JONES [*gloomily*]. Yo' kin bet yo' whole roll on one thing, white man. Dis baby plays out his string to de end and when he quits, he quits wid a bang de way he ought. Silver bullet ain't none too good for him when he go, dat's a fac'! [*Then shaking off his nervousness—with a confident laugh*]. Sho'! What is I talkin' about? Ain't come to dat yit an' I never will—not wid trash niggers like dese yere. [*Boastfully*]. Silver bullet bring me luck anyway. I kin outguess, outrun, outfight, an' outplay de whole lot o' dem all ovah de board any time o' de day er night! Yo' watch me!

*[From the distant hills comes the faint, steady thump of a tom-tom, low and vibrating. It starts at a rate exactly corresponding to normal pulse beat—72 to the minute—and continues at a gradually accelerating rate from this point uninterruptedly to the very end of the play].*

*[Jones starts at the sound; a strange look of apprehension creeps into his face for a moment as he listens. Then he asks, with an attempt to regain his most casual manner—].*

What's dat drum beatin' fo'?

SMITHERS [*with a mean grin*]. For you. That means the bleedin' ceremony 'as started. I've 'eard it before and I knows.

JONES. Cer'mony? What cer'mony?

SMITHERS. The blacks is 'oldin' a bloody meetin', 'avin' a war dance, gettin' their courage worked up b'fore they starts after you.

JONES. Let dem! Dey'll sho' need it!

SMITHERS. And they're there 'oldin' their 'eathen religious service—makin' no end of devil spells and charms to 'elp 'em against

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your silver bullet. [*He guffaws loudly*]. Blimey, but they're balmy as 'ell.

JONES [*a tiny bit awed and shaken in spite of himself*]. Huh! Takes moren' dat to scare dis chicken!

SMITHERS [*scenting the other's feeling—maliciously*]. Ternight when it's pitch black in the forest, they'll 'ave their pet devils and ghosts 'oundin' after you. You'll find yer bloody 'air 'll be standin' on end before tomorrow mornin'. [*Seriously*]. It's a bleedin' queer place, that stinkin' forest, even in daylight. Yer don't know what might 'appen in there, it's that rotten still. Always sends the cold shivers down my back minute I gets in it.

JONES [*with a contemptuous sniff*]. I ain't no chicken-liver like you is. Trees an' me, we'se friends, an' dar's a full moon comin' bring me light. And let dem po' niggers make all de fool spells dey'se a min' to. Does yo' s'pect I'se silly enuff to b'lieve in ghosts an' han'nts an' all dat ole woman's talk? G'long, white man! You ain't talkin' to me. [*With a chuckle*]. Doesn't you knows dey's got to do wid a man' was member in good standin' o' de Baptist Church. Sho' I was dat when I was porter on de Pullman, an' befo' I gits into my little trouble. Let dem try deir heathen tricks. De Baptist Church done perfect me an' land dem all in hell. [*Then with more confident satisfaction*]. An' I'se got little silver bullet o' my own, don't forgit.

SMITHERS. Ho! You 'aven't give much 'eed to your Baptist Church since you been down 'ere. I've 'eard myself and 'ad turned yer coat an' was takin' up with their blarsted witch-doctors, or whatever the 'ell yer calls the swine.

JONES [*vehemently*]. I pretends to! Sho' I pretends! Dat's part o' my game from de fust. If I finds out dem niggers believes dat black is white, den I yells it out louder 'n some deir loudest. It don't git me nothin' to do missionary work for de Baptist Church. I'se after de coin, an' I lays my Jesus on de shelf for de time bein'. [*Stops abruptly to look at his watch—alertly*]. But I ain't got de time to waste no moe fool talk wid you. I'se gwine away from heah dis secon'. [*He reaches in under the throne and pulls out an expensive Panama hat with a bright multi-colored band and sets it jauntily on his head*]. So long, white man! [*With a grin*]. See you in jail sometime, maybe!

SMITHERS. No me, you won't. Well, I wouldn't be in yer bloody boots for no bloomin' money, but 'ere's wishin' yer luck just the same.

JONES [*contemptuously*]. You're de frightenedest man evah I see! I tells you I'se safe 's'f I was in New York City. It take dem



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niggers from now to dark to git up de nerve to start somethin'. By dat time, I'se got a head start dey never ketch up wid.

SMITHERS [*maliciously*]. Give my regards to any ghosts yer meets up with.

JONES [*grinning*]. If dat ghost got money, I'll tell him never ha'nt you less'n he wants to lose it.

SMITHERS [*flattered*]. Garn! [*Then curiously*]. Ain't yer takin' no luggage with yer?

JONES. I travels light when I wants to move fast. And I got tinned grub buried on de edge o' de forest. [*Boastfully*]. Now say dat I don't look ahead an' use my brains! [*With a wide, liberal gesture*]. I will all dat's left in de palace to you—an' you better grab all you kin sneak away wid befo' dey gits here.

SMITHERS [*gratefully*]. Righto—and thanks ter yer. [*As Jones walks toward the door in rear—cautioningly*]. Say! Look 'ere, you ain't goin' out that way, are yer?

JONES. Does you think I'd slink out de back door like a common nigger? I'se Emperor yit, ain't I? And de Emperor Jones leaves de way he comes, and dat black trash don't dare stop him—not yit, leastways. [*He stops for a moment in the doorway, listening to the far-off but insistent beat of the tom-tom*]. Listen to dat roll-call, will yo'? Must be mighty big drum carry dat far. [*Then with a laugh*]. Well, if dey ain't no whole brass band to see me off, I sho' got de drum part of it. So long, white man. [*He puts his hands in his pockets and with studied carelessness, whistling a tune, he saunters out of the doorway and off to the left*].

SMITHERS [*looks after him with a puzzled admiration*]. 'E's got 'is bloomin' nerve with 'im, s'elp me! [*Then angrily*]. Ho—the bleedin' nigger—puttin' on 'is bloody airs! I 'opes they nabs 'im an' gives 'im what's what! [*Then putting business before the pleasure of his thought, looking around him with cupidity*]. A bloke ought to find a 'ole lot in this palace that' go for a bit of cash. Let's take a look, 'Arry, me lad. [*He starts for the doorway on right as*]

THE CURTAIN FALLS.

SCENE TWO: NIGHTFALL. *The end of the plain where the Great Forest begins. The foreground is sandy, level ground dotted by a few stones and clumps of stunted bushes cowering close against the earth to escape the buffeting of the trade wind. In the rear the forest is a wall of darkness dividing the world. Only when the eye becomes accustomed to the gloom can the outlines of separate trunks of the nearest trees be made out, enormous pillars of deeper black-*

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ness. *A somber monotone of wind lost in the leaves moans in the air. Yet this sound serves but to intensify the impression of the forest's relentless immobility, to form a background throwing into relief, its brooding, implacable silence.*

*[Jones enters from the left, walking rapidly. He stops as he nears the edge of the forest, looks around him quickly, peering into the dark as if searching for some familiar landmark. Then, apparently satisfied that he is where he ought to be, he throws himself on the ground, dog-tired.]*

Well, heah I is. In de nick o' time, too! Little mo' an' it'd be blacker'n de ace of spades heahabouts. *[He pulls a bandana handkerchief from his hip pocket and mops off his perspiring face.]* So! Gimme air! I'se tuckered out sho' 'nuff. Dat soft Emperor job ain't no trainin' fo' a long hike ovah dat plain in de brilin' sun. *[Then with a chuckle.]* Cheah up, nigger, de worst is yet to come. *[He lifts his head and stares at the forest. His chuckle peters out abruptly. In a tone of awe.]* My goodness, look at dem woods, will you? Dat no-count Smithers said dey'd be black an' he sho' called de turn. *[Turning away from them quickly and looking down at his feet, he snatches at a chance to change the subject—solicitously.]* Feet, yo' is holdin' up yo' end fine an' I sutinly hopes you ain't blisterin' none. It's time you git a rest. *[He takes off his shoes, his eyes studiously avoiding the forest. He feels of the soles of his feet gingerly.]* You is still in de pink—only a little mite feverish. Cool you'selfs. Remember yo' done got a long journey yit befo' yo'. *[He sits in a weary attitude, listening to the rhythmic beating of the tom-tom. He grumbles in a loud tone to cover up a growing uneasiness.]* Bush niggers! Wonder dey wouldn't git sick o' beatin' dat drum. Sound louder, seem like. I wonder if dey's startin' after me? *[He scrambles to his feet, looking back across the plain.]* Couldn't see dem now, nohow, if dey was hundred feet away. *[Then shaking himself like a wet dog to get rid of these depressing thoughts.]* Sho', dey's miles an' miles behind. What yo' gittin' fidgetty about? *[But he sits down and begins to lace up his shoes in great haste, all the time, muttering reassuringly.]* You know what? Yo' belly is empty, dat's what's de matter wid you. Come time to eat! Wid nothin' but wind on yo' stumach, o' course yo' feels juggedy. Well, we eats right heah an' now soon's I gits dese pesky shoes laced up. *[He finishes lacing up his shoes.]* Dere! Now le's see! *[Gets on his hands and knees and searches the ground around him with his eyes.]* White stone, white stone, where is yo'? *[He*

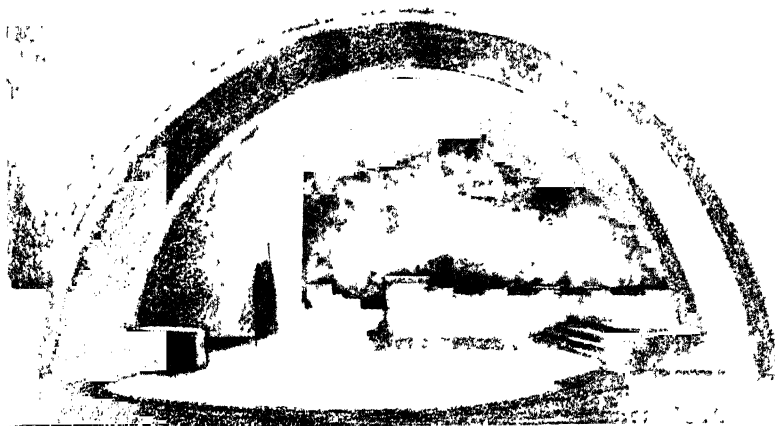
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*sees the first white stone and crawls to it—with satisfaction.]* Heah yo' is! I knowed dis was de right place. Box of grub, come to me. *[He turns over the stone and feels in under it—in a tone of dismay.]* Ain't heah! Gorry, is I in de right place or isn't I? Dere's 'nother stone. Guess dat's it. *[He scrambles to the next stone and turns it over.]* Ain't heah, neither! Grub, whar is yo'? Ain't heah. Gorry, has I got to go hungry into dem woods—all de night? *[While he is talking he scrambles from one stone to another, turning them over in frantic haste. Finally he jumps to his feet excitedly.]* Is I lost de place? Must have! But how dat happen when I was followin' de trail across de plain in broad daylight? *[Almost plaintively.]* I'se hungry, I is! I gotta git my food. Whar's my strength gonna come from if I doesn't? Gorry, I gotta find dat grub high an' low somehow! Why it come dark so quick like dat? Can't see nothin'. *[He scratches a match on his trousers and peers about him. The rate of the beat of the far-off tom-tom increases perceptibly as he does so. He mutters in a bewildered voice.]* How come all dese white stones come heah when I only remembers one? *[Suddenly, with a frightened gasp, he flings the match on the ground and stamps on it.]* Nigger, is yo' gone crazy mad? Is you lightin' matches to show dem whar you is? Fo' Lawd's sake, use yo' haid. Gorry, I'se got to be careful! *[He stares at the plain behind him apprehensively, his hand on his revolver.]* But how come all dese white stones? And whar's dat tin box o' grub I hid all wrapped up in oil cloth?

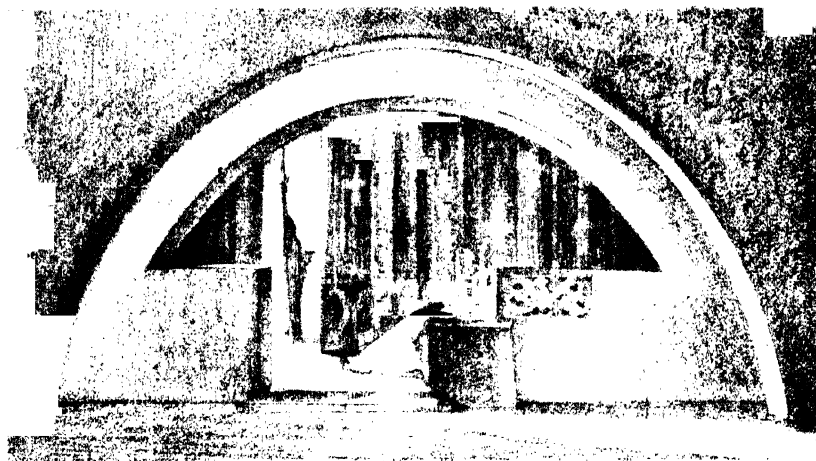
*[While his back is turned, the Little Formless Fears creep out from the deeper blackness of the forest. They are black, shapeless, only their glittering little eyes can be seen. If they have any describable form at all it is that of a grubworm about the size of a creeping child. They move noiselessly, but with deliberate, painful effort, striving to raise themselves on end, failing and sinking prone again. Jones turns about to face the forest. He stares up at the tops of the trees, seeking vainly to discover his whereabouts by their conformation.]*

Can't tell nothin' from dem trees! Gorry, nothin' 'round heah look like I evah seed it befo'. I'se done leat de place sho' 'nuff! *[With mournful foreboding.]* It's mighty queer! It's mighty queer! *[With sudden forced defiance—in an angry tone.]* Woods, is yo' tryin' to put somethin' ovah on me?

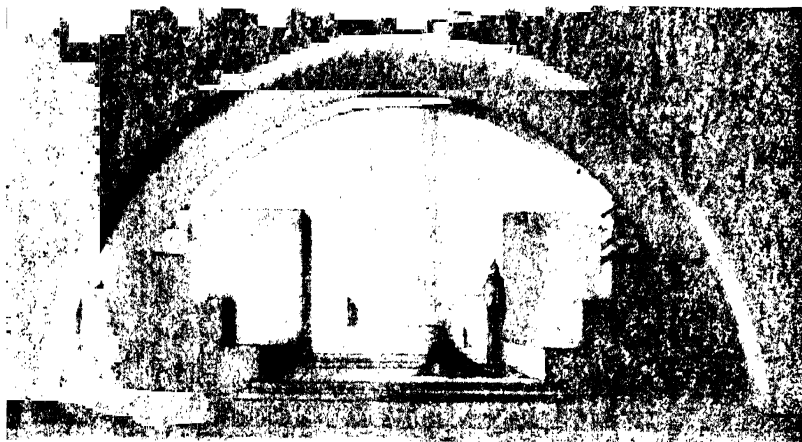
*[From the formless creatures on the ground in front of him comes a tiny gale of low mocking laughter like a rustling of leaves. They squirm upward toward him in*



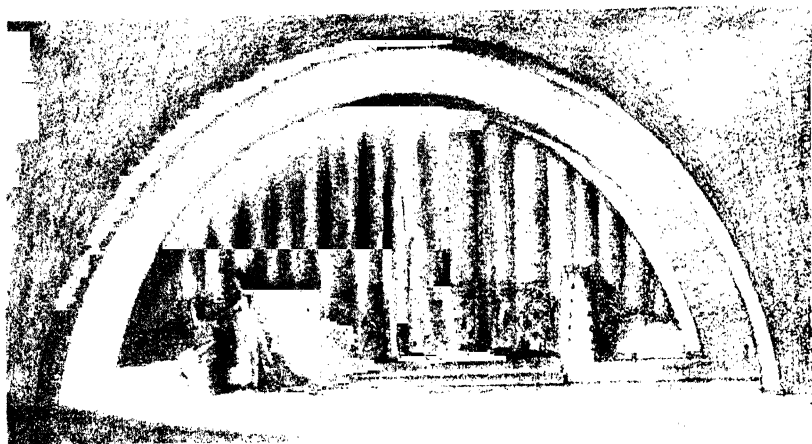
Four Designs by H. Th. Wijdeveld for *Hamlet*, as produced recently at Amsterdam under the direction of Eduard Verkaide. The designer not only has utilized the ideas of a permanent skeleton construction throughout the many scenes, and of a few interchangeable elements for the assembling of varied settings—ideas which have become part of the best practice in the more progressive Continental theatres—but has also succeeded in stamping the whole series with a spiritual conception or an individual style growing out of his reading of the play text. H. Th. Wijdeveld is a noted Dutch architect who has also achieved a considerable reputation in the field of stage decoration and as Editor of *Wendingen*, a sumptuous journal of modern tendencies in art. His unique design for a people's theatre appears on page 16. Above is the terrace scene.



The scene of Ophelia and Hamlet.



The Players' scene.



The Queen's Chamber.

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*twisted attitudes. Jones looks down, leaps backward with a yell of terror, yanking out his revolver as he does so—in a quavering voice.]*

What's dat? Who's dar? What 's you? Git away from me befo' I shoots yo' up! Yo' don't?—

*[He fires. There is a flash, a loud report, then silence broken only by the far-off, quickened throb of the tomtom. The formless creatures have scurried back into the forest. Jones remains fixed in his position, listening intently. The sound of the shot, the reassuring feel of the revolver in his hand have somewhat restored his shaken nerve. He addresses himself with renewed confidence.]*

Dey're gone. Dat shot fix 'em. Dey was only little animals—little wild pigs, I reckon. Dey've maybe rooted out yo' grub an' eat it. Sho', yo' fool nigger, what yo' think dey is—ha'nts? *[Excitedly.]* Gorrry, you give de game away when yo' fire dat shot. Dem niggers heah dat fo' su'tin! Time yo' beat it in de woods widout no long waits. *[He starts for the forest—hesitates before the plunge—then urging himself in with manful resolution.]* Git in, nigger! What yo' skeered at? Ain't nothin' dere but de trees! Git in! *[He plunges boldly into the forest.]*

### SCENE THREE.

*[Nine o'clock. In the forest. The moon has just risen. Its beams drifting through the canopy of leaves, make a barely perceptible, suffused eerie glow. A dense low wall of underbrush and creepers is in the nearer foreground forming in a small triangular clearing. Beyond this is the massed blackness of the forest like an encompassing barrier. A path is dimly discerned leading down to the clearing from left, rear, and winding away from it again toward the right. As the scene opens nothing can be distinctly made out. Except for the beating of the tomtom, which is a trifle louder and quicker than in the previous scene, there is silence broken every few seconds by a queer, clicking sound. Then gradually the figure of the negro, Jeff, can be discerned crouching on his haunches at the rear of the triangle. He is middle-aged, thin, brown in color, is dressed in a Pullman porter's uniform, cap, etc. He is throwing a pair of dice on the ground before him, picking them up, shaking them, casting them out with the regular, rigid, mechanical move-*



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*ments of an automaton. The heavy, plodding footsteps of someone approaching along the trail from the left are heard and Jones' voice, pitched in a slightly higher key and strained in a cheering effort to overcome its own tremors.]*

De moon's rizen. Does yo' heah dat, nigger? Yo' gits more light from dis out. No mo' buttin' yo' fool head agin' de trunks an' scratchin' de hide off yo' legs in de bushes. Now yo' sees whar yo'se gwine. So cheer up! From now on yo' has a snap. [*He steps just to the rear of the triangular cleaning and mops off his face on his sleeve. He has lost his Panama hat. His face is scratched, his brilliant uniform shows several large rents.*] What time's it gittin' to be, I wonder? I dassent light no match to find out. Phoo'. It's wa'm an' dat's a fac'! [*Wearily.*] How long I been makin' tracks in dese woods? Must be hours an' hours. Seems like fo'evah! Yit can't be, when de moon's jes' riz. Dis am a long night fo' yo', yo' Majesty! [*With a mournful chuckle.*] Majesty! Der ain't much majesty 'bout dis baby now. [*With attempted cheerfulness.*] Never min'. It's all part o' de game. Dis night come to an end like everythin' else. An' when yo' gits dar safe an' has dat bankroll in yo' hands, yo' laughs at all dis. [*He starts to whistle but checks himself abruptly.*] What you' whistlin' for, yo' po' dope! Want all de worl' to heah yo'? [*He stops talking to listen.*] Heah dat ole drum! Sho' gits nearer from de sound. Dey're packin' it along wid 'em. Time fo' me to move. [*He takes a step forward, then stops—worriedly.*] What's dat odder queer clicketty sound I heah? Der it is! Sound close! Sound like—fo' God sake, sound like some nigger was shakin' crap! [*Frightenedly.*] I better beat it quick when I gits dem notions. [*He walks quickly into the clear space—then stands transfixed as he sees Jeff—in a terrified gasp.*] Who dar? Who dat? Is dat yo', Jeff? [*Starting toward the other, forgetful for a moment of his surroundings and really believing it is a living man that he sees—in a tone of happy relief.*] Jeff! I'se sho' mighty glad to see yo'! Dey tol' me yo' done died from dat razor cut I gives you. [*Stopping suddenly, bewilderedly.*] But how you come to be heah, nigger? [*He stares fascinatedly at the other who continues his mechanical play with the dice. Jones' eyes begin to roll wildly. He stutters.*] Ain't you gwine—look up—can't you speak to me? Is you—is you—a ha'nt? [*He jerks out his revolver in a frenzy of terrified rage.*] Nigger, I kills yo' dead once. Has I got to kill yo' agin? You take it den. [*He fires. When the smoke clears away Jeff has disappeared. Jones stands trembling—then with a certain*

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reassurance.] He's gone, anyway. Ha'nt or no ha'nt, dat shot fix him. [*The beat of the far-off tom-tom is perceptibly louder and more rapid. Jones becomes conscious of it—with a start, looking back over his shoulder.*] Dey's gittin' near! Dey'se comin' fast! An' heah I is shootin' shots to let 'em know jes' whar I is. Oh, Gorry, I'se got to run. [*Forgetting the path he plunges wildly into the underbrush in the rear and disappears in the shadow.*]

### SCENE FOUR:

[*Eleven o'clock. In the forest. A wide dirt road runs diagonally from right, front, to left, rear. Rising sheer on both sides the forest walls it in. The moon is now up. Under its light the road glimmers ghastly and unreal. It is as if the forest had stood aside momentarily to let the road pass through and accomplish its veiled purpose. This done, the forest will fold in upon itself again and the road will be no more. Jones stumbles in from the forest on the right. His uniform is ragged and torn. He looks about him with numbed surprise when he sees the road, his eyes blinking in the bright moonlight. He flops down exhaustedly and pants heavily for a while. Then with sudden anger.*]

I'm meltin' wid heat! Runnin' an' runnin' an' runnin'! Damn dis heah coat! Like a strait jacket! [*He tears off his coat and flings it away from him, revealing himself stripped to the waist.*] Dere! Dat's better! Now I kin breathe! [*Looking down at his feet, the spurs catch his eye.*] An' to hell wid dese high-fangled spurs. Dey're what's been a-trippin' me up an' breakin' my neck. [*He unstraps and flings them away disgustedly.*] Dere! I gits rid o' dem frippety Emperor trappin's an' I travels lighter. Lawd! I'se tired! [*After a pause, listening to the insistent beat of the tom-tom in the distance.*] I must 'a put some distance between myself an' dem—runnin' like dat—an' yet—dat damn drum sound jes' de same—nearer, even. Well, I guess I a'most holds my lead anyhow. Dey won't never cotch up. [*With a sigh.*] If on'y my fool legs stands up. Oh, I'se sorry I eyah went in for dis. Dat Emperor job is sho' hard to shake. [*He looks around him suspiciously.*] How'd dis road evah git heah? Good level road, too. I never remembers seein' it befo'. [*Shaking his head apprehensively.*] Dese woods is sho' full o' de queerest things at night. [*With sudden terror.*] Lawd God, don't let me see no more o' dem ha'nts! Dey gits my goat! [*Then trying to talk himself into confidence.*] Ha'nts! Yo' fool nigger,

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dey ain't no such things! Don't de Baptist parson tell you dat many time? Is yo' civilized, or is yo' like dese ign'rent black nigger's heah? Sho'! Dat was all in yo' own head. Wasn't nothin' there! Wasn't no Jeff! Know what? Yo' jus' get seein' dem thing 'cause yo' belly's empty an' you's sick wid hunger inside. Hunger 'fects yo' head an' yo' eyes. Any fool know dat. [*Then pleading fervently.*] But Bless God I don't come across no more o' dem, whatever dey is! [*Then cautiously.*] Rest! Don't talk! Rest! You needs it. Den yo' gits on yo' way again. [*Looking at the moon.*] Night's half gone a' most. Yo' hits de coast in de mawning! Den you'se all safe.

[*From the right forward a small gang of negroes enter. They are dressed in striped convicts' suits, their heads are shaven, one leg drags limpingly, shackled to a heavy ball and chain. Some carry picks, the others shovels. They are followed by a white man dressed in the uniform of a prison guard. A Winchester rifle is slung across his shoulders and he carries a heavy whip. At a signal from the guard they stop on the road opposite where Jones is sitting. Jones, who has been staring up at the sky, unmindful of their noiseless approach, suddenly looks down and sees them. His eyes pop out, he tries to get to his feet and fly, but sinks back, too numbed by fright to move. His voice catches in a choking prayer.*]

Lawd Jesus!

[*The prison guard cracks his whip—noiselessly—and at that signal all the convicts start to work on the road. They swing their picks, they shovel, but not a sound comes from their labor. Their movements, like those of Jeff in the preceeding scene, are those of automaton,—rigid, slow and mechanical. The prison guard points sternly at Jones with his whip, motions him to take his place among the other shovellers. Jones gets to his feet in a hypnotized stupor. He mumbles subserviently.*]

Yes, suh! Yes, suh! I'se comin'!

[*As he shuffles, dragging one foot, over to his place, he curses under his breath with rage and hatred.*]

God damn yo' soul, I gits even wid yo' yit, sometime.

[*As if there was a shovel in his hands he goes through weary, mechanical gestures of digging up dirt, and throwing it to the roadside. Suddenly the guard approaches him angrily, threateningly. He raises his whip and lashes Jones viciously across the shoulders with it.*

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*Jones winces with pain and cowers abjectly. The guard turns his back on him and walks away contemptuously. Instantly Jones straightens up. With arms upraised as if his shovel were a club in his hands he springs murderously at the unsuspecting guard. In the act of crashing down his shovel on the white man's skull, Jones suddenly becomes aware that his hands are empty. He cries despairingly.]*

Whar's my shovel? Gimme my shovel 'till I splits his damn head! [*Appealing to his fellow convicts.*] Gimme a shovel, one o' yo' fo' God's sake!

*[They stand fixed in motionless attitudes, their eyes on the ground. The guard seems to wait expectantly, his back turned to the attacker. Jones bellows with baffled, terrified rage, tugging frantically at his revolver.]*

I kills you, you white debil, if it's de last thing I evah does! Ghost or debil, I kill you agin!

*[He frees the revolver and fires point blank at the guard's back. Instantly the walls of the forest close in from both sides, the road and the figures of the convict gang are blotted out in an enshrouding darkness. The only sounds are a crashing in the underbrush as Jones leaps away in mad flight and the throbbing boom of the tom-tom, still far distant, but increased in volume of sound and rapidity of beat.]*

### SCENE FIVE:

*[One o'clock. A large circular clearing, enclosed by the serried ranks of lofty, gigantic trunks of tall trees whose tops are lost to view. In the center is a big dead stump worn by time into a curious resemblance to an auction block. The moon floods the clearing with a clear light. Jones forces his way in through the forest on the left. He looks wildly about the clearing with hunted, fearful glances. His pants are in tatters, his shoes cut and misshapen, flapping about his feet. He slinks cautiously to the stump in the center and sits down in a tense position, ready for instant flight. Then he holds his head in his hands and rocks back and forth moaning to himself miserably.]*

Oh Lawd, Lawd! Oh Lawd, Lawd! [*Suddenly he throws himself on his knees and raises his clasped hands to the sky—in a voice of*

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*agonized pleading.*] Lawd, Jesus, heah my prayer! I'se a poor sinner, a poor sinner! I knows I done wrong, I knows it! When I cotches Jeff cheatin' wid loaded dice my anger overcomes me an' I kills him dead! Lawd, I done wrong! When dat guard hits me wid de whip, my anger overcomes me, and I kills him dead. Lawd, I done wrong! An' down heah whar dese fool bush niggers raises me up to the seat o' de mighty, I steals all I could grab. Lawd, I done wrong! I knows it! I'se sorry! Forgive me, Lawd! Forgive dis po' sinner! [*Then beseeching terrifiedly.*] An' keep dem away, Lawd! Keep dem away from me! An' stop dat drum soundin' in my ears! Dat begin to sound ha'ted, too. [*He gets to his feet, evidently slightly reassured by his prayer—with attempted confidence.*] De Lawd'll preserve me from dem ha'nts after dis. [*Sits down on the stump again.*] I ain't skeered o' real men. Let dem come. But dem odders— [*He shudders—then looks down at his feet, working his toes inside the shoes—with a groan.*] Oh, my po' feet! Dem shoes ain't no use no more 'ceptin' to hurt. I'se better off widout dem. [*He unlaces them and pulls them off—holds the wrecks of the shoes in his hand and regards them mournfully.*] You was real, A-one patin' leather, too. Look at yo' now. Emperor, you'se gittin' mighty low!

[*He sighs dejectedly and remains with bowed shoulders staring down at the shoes in his hands as if reluctant to throw them away. While his attention is thus occupied, a crowd of figures silently enter the clearing from all sides. All are dressed in Southern costumes of the period of the fifties of the last century. There are middle-aged men who are evidently well-to-do planters. There is one spruce, authoritative individual—the auctioneer. There are a crowd of curious spectators, chiefly young belles and dandies who have come to the slave-market for diversion. All exchange courtly greetings in dumb show and chat silently together. There is something stiff, rigid, unreal, marionettish about their movements. They group themselves about the stump. Finally a batch of slaves are led in from the left by an attendant—three men of different ages, two women, one with a baby in her arms, nursing. They are placed to the left of the stump, besides Jones.*

*The white planters look them over appraisingly as if they were cattle, and exchange judgments on each. The dandies point with their fingers and make witty remarks.*

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*The belles titter bewitchingly. All this in silence save for the ominous throb of the tom-tom. The auctioneer holds up his hand, taking his place at the stump. The groups strain forward attentively. He touches Jones on the shoulder peremptorily, motioning for him to stand on the stump—the auction block.*

*Jones looks up, sees the figures on all sides, looks wildly for some opening to escape, sees none, screams and leaps madly to the top of the stump to get as far away from them as possible. He stands there, cowering, paralyzed with horror. The Auctioneer begins his silent spiel. He points to Jones, appeals to the planters to see for themselves. Here is a good field hand, sound in wind and limb as they can see. Very strong still in spite of his being middle-aged. Look at that back. Look at those shoulders. Look at the muscles in his arms and his sturdy legs. Capable of any amount of hard labor. Moreover, of a good disposition, intelligent and tractable. Will any gentleman start the bidding? The planters raise their fingers, make their bids. They are apparently all eager to possess Jones. The bidding is lively, the crowd interested. While this has been going on, Jones has been seized by the courage of desperation. He dares to look down and around him. Over his face abject terror gives way to mystification, to gradual realization—stutteringly.]*

*What yo' all doin', white folks? What's all dis? What yo' all lookin' at me fo'? What yo' doin' wid me, anyhow? [Suddenly convulsed with raging hatred and fear]. Is dis a auction? Is yo' sellin' me like dey uster befo' de war? [Jerking out his revolver just as the auctioneer knocks him down to one of the planters—glaring from him to the purchaser]. An' you sells me? An' you buys me? I shows you I'se a free nigger, damn yo' souls! [He fires at the auctioneer and at the planter with such rapidity that the two shots are almost simultaneous. As if this were a signal the walls of the forest fold in.—Only blackness remains and silence broken by Jones as he rushes off, crying with fear—and by the quickened, ever louder beat of the tom-tom.]*

### SCENE SIX:

*[Three o'clock. A cleared space in the forest. The limbs of the trees meet over it forming a low ceiling about five*

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*feet from the ground. The interlocked ropes of creepers reaching upward to entwine the tree trunks give an arched appearance to the sides. The space this encloses is like the dark, noisome hold of some ancient vessel. The moonlight is almost completely shut out and only a vague, wan light filters through. The scene is in complete darkness at first. There is the noise of someone approaching from the left, stumbling and crawling through the undergrowth. Jones' voice is heard, between chattering moans.]*

Oh Lawd, what I gwine do now? Ain't got no bullet left on'y de silver one. If mo' o' dem ha'nts come after me, how I gwine skeer dem away? Oh Lawd, on'y de silver one left—an' I gotta save dat fo' luck. If I shoots dat one I'm a goner sho'! Lawd, it's black heah! Whar's de moon? Oh, Lawd, don't dis night evah come to an end? [*By the sounds, he is feeling his way cautiously forward*]. Dere! Dis feels like a clear space. I gotta lie down an' rest. I don't care if dem niggers does catch me. I gotta rest.

*[He is well forward now where his figure can be dimly made out. His pants have been so torn away that what is left of them is no better than a breech cloth. He flings himself full length, face downward on the ground, panting with exhaustion. Gradually it seems to grow lighter in the enclosed space and two rows of seated figures can be seen behind Jones. They are sitting in crumpled, despairing attitudes, hunched facing one another with their backs touching the forest walls as if they were shackled to them. All are negroes, naked save for loin cloths. At first they are silent and motionless. Then they begin to sway slowly forward toward each other and back again in unison, as if they were laxly letting themselves follow the long roll of a ship at sea. At the same time, a low, melancholy murmur rises among them, increasing gradually by rhythmic degrees which seem to be directed and controlled by the throb of the tom-tom in the distance, to a long, tremendous wail of despair that reaches a certain pitch, unbearably acute, then falls by slow gradations of tone into silence and is taken up again. Jones starts, looks up, sees the figures, and throws himself down again to shut off the sight. A shudder of terror shakes his whole body as the wail rises up about him again. But the next time, his voice, as if*

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*under some uncanny compulsion, starts with the others. As their chorus lifts he rises to a sitting posture similar to the others, swaying back and forth. His voice reaches the highest pitch of sorrow, of desolation. The light fades out, the other voices cease, and only darkness is left. Jones can be heard scrambling to his feet and running off, his voice sinking down the scale and receding as he moves farther and farther away in the forest. The tom-tom beats louder, quicker, with a more insistent, triumphant pulsation.]*

### SCENE SEVEN:

*[Five o'clock. The foot of a gigantic tree by the edge of a great river. A rough structure of boulders, like an altar, is by the tree. The raised river bank is in the nearer background. Beyond this the surface of the river spreads out, brilliant and unruffled in the moonlight, is blotted out and merged with a veil to bluish mist in the distance. Jones' voice is heard from the left rising and falling in the long, despairing wail of the chained slaves, to the rhythmic beat of the tom-tom.—As his voice sinks into silence, he enters the open space.—The expression of his face is fixed and stony, his eyes have an obsessed glare, he moves with a strange deliberation like a sleep-walker or one in a trance. He looks around at the tree, the rough stone altar, the moonlit surface of the river beyond and passes his hand over his head with a vague gesture of puzzled bewilderment. Then, as if in obedience to some obscure impulse, he goes into a kneeling, devotional posture before the altar. Then he seems to come to himself partly, to have an uncertain realization of what he is doing, for he straightens up and stares about him horrifiedly—in an incoherent mumble.]*

What—what is I doin'? What is—dis place? Seems like—seems like I know dat tree—an' dem stones—an' de river. I remember—seems like I been heah befo'. *[Tremblingly]*. Oh, Gorry, I'se skeered in dis place! I'se skeered! Oh, Lawd, pertect dis sinner!

*[Crawling away from the altar, he cowers close to the ground, his face hidden, his shoulders heaving with sobs of hysterical fright. From behind the trunk of the tree, as if he had sprung out of it, the figure of the Congo witchdoctor appears. He is wizened and old, naked except for the fur of some small animal tied about his*



*waist, its bushy tail hanging down in front like a Highlander's. His body is stained all over a bright red. Antelope horns are on each side of his head, branching upward. In one hand he carries a bone rattle, in the other a charm stick with a bunch of white cockatoo feathers tied to the end. A great number of glass beads and bone ornaments are about his neck, ears, wrists, and ankles. He struts noiselessly with a queer prancing step to a position in the clear ground between Jones and the altar. Then with a preliminary, summoning stamp of his foot on the earth, he begins to dance and to chant. As if in response to his summons the beating of the tomtom grows to a fierce, exultant boom whose throbs seem to fill the air with vibrating rhythm. Jones looks up, starts to spring to his feet, reaches a half-kneeling, half-squatting position and remains rigidly fixed there, paralyzed with awed fascination by this new apparition. The witch-doctor sways, stamping with his foot, his bone rattle clicking the time. His voice rises and falls in a weird, monotonous croon, without articulate word division. Gradually his dance becomes clearly one of a narrative in pantomime, his croon is an incantation, a charm to allay the fierceness of some implacable deity demanding sacrifice. He flees, he is pursued by devils, he hides, he flees again. Ever wilder and wilder becomes his flight, nearer and nearer draws the pursuing evil, more and more the spirit of terror gains possession of him. His croon, rising to intensity, is punctuated by shrill cries. Jones has become completely hypnotized. His voice joins in the incantation, in the cries, he beats time with his hands and sways his body to and fro from the waist. The whole spirit and meaning of the dance has entered into him, has become his spirit. Finally the theme of the pantomime halts, on a howl of despair, and is taken up again in a note of savage hope. There is a salvation. The forces of evil demand sacrifice. They must be appeased. The Witch-Doctor points with his wand to the sacred tree, the river beyond, to the altar, and finally to Jones with a ferocious command. Jones seems to sense the meaning of this. It is he who must offer himself for sacrifice. He beats his forehead abjectly to the ground, moaning hysterically.]*

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Mercy, Oh Lawd! Mercy! Mercy on dis po' sinner!

[*The Witch-doctor springs to the river bank. He stretches out his arms and calls to some God within its depths. Then he starts backward slowly, his arms remaining out. A huge head of crocodile appears over the bank and its eyes, glittering greenly, fasten upon Jones. He stares into them fascinatedly. The witch-doctor prances up to him, touches him with his wand, motions with hideous command toward the waiting monster. Jones squirms on his belly nearer and nearer, moaning continually.*]

Mercy, Lawd! Mercy!

[*The crocodile heaves more of his enormous hulk onto the land. Jones squirms toward him. The witch-doctor's voice shrills out in furious exultation, the tom-tom beats madly. Jones cries out in fierce, exhausted spasms of anguished pleading.*]

Lawd, save me! Lawd Jesus, heah my prayer!

[*Immediately, in answer to his prayer, comes the thought of the one bullet left him. He snatches at his hip, shouting defiantly.*]

De silver bullet! Yo' don't git me yit!

[*He fires at the green eyes in front of him. The head of the crocodile sinks back behind the river bank, the witch-doctor springs behind the sacred tree and disappears. Jones lies with his face to the ground, his arms outstretched, whimpering with fear as the throb of the tom-tom fills the silence about him with a somber pulsation, a baffled but revengeful power.*]

### SCENE EIGHT:

[*Dawn. Same as scene two, the dividing line of forest and plain. The nearest tree trunks are dimly revealed but the forest behind them is still a mass of glooming shadow. The tom-tom seems on the very spot, so loud and continuously vibrating are its beats. Lem enters from the left, followed by a small squad of his soldiers, and by the Cockney trader, Smithers. Lem is a heavy-set, ape-faced old savage of the extreme African type, dressed only in a loin cloth. A revolver and cartridge belt are about his waist. His soldiers are in different degrees of rag-concealed nakedness. All wear broad*

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*palm leaf hats. Each one carries a rifle. Smithers is the same as in Scene One. One of the soldiers, evidently a tracker, is peering about keenly on the ground. He grunts and points to the spot where Jones entered the forest. Lem and Smithers come to look.]*

SMITHERS [*after a glance, turns away in disgust*]. That's where 'e went in right enough. Much good it'll do yer. 'E's miles orf by this an' safe to the Coast, damn 'is 'ide! I tole yer yer'd lose 'im, didn't I?—wastin' the 'ole bloomin' night beatin' yer bloody drum and castin' yer silly spells! Gawd blimey, wot a pack!

LEM [*gutterally*]. We cotch him. You see. [*He makes a motion to his soldiers, who squat down on their haunches in a semi-circle.*]

SMITHERS [*exasperatedly*]. Well, ain't yer goin' in an' 'unt 'im in the woods? What the 'ell's the good of waitin'?

LEM [*imperturbably—squatting down himself.*] We cotch him.

SMITHERS [*turning away from him contemptuously*]. Aw! Garn! 'E's a better man than the lot o' you put together. I 'ates the sight o' 'im but I'll say that for 'im.

*[A sound of snapping twigs comes from the forest. The soldiers jump to their feet, cocking their rifles alertly. Lem remains sitting with an imperturbable expression, but listening intently. The sound from the woods is repeated. Lem makes a quick signal with his hand. His followers creep quickly but noiselessly into the forest, scattering so that each enters at a different spot.]*

SMITHERS [*in the silence that follows—in a contemptuous whisper*]. You ain't thinkin' that would be 'im, I 'ope?

LEM [*calmly*]. We cotch him.

SMITHERS. Blarsted fat 'eads! [*Then after a second's thought—wonderingly*]. Still an' all, it might happen. If 'e lost 'is bloody way in these stinkin' woods 'e'd likely turn in a circle without 'is knowin' it. They all does.

LEM [*peremptorily*]. Ssshh!

*[The report of several rifles sound from the forest, followed a second later by savage, exultant yells. The beating of the tom-tom abruptly ceases. Lem looks up at the white man with a grin of satisfaction.]*

We cotch him. Him dead.

SMITHERS [*with a snarl*]. 'Ow d'yer know it's 'im an' 'ow d'yer know 'e's dead?

LEM. My men's dey got 'um silver bullets. Dey kill him shore.

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SMITHERS [*astonished*]. They got silver bullets?

LEM. Lead bullet no kill him. He got um strong charm. I took um money, make um silver bullet, make um strong charm, too.

SMITHERS [*light breaking upon him*]. So that's wot you was up to all night, wot? You was scared to put after 'im till you'd moulded silver bullets, eh?

LEM [*simply stating a fact*]. Yes. Him got strong charm. Lead no good.

SMITHERS [*slapping his thigh and guffawing*]. Haw-haw! If yer don't beat al 'ell! [*Then recovering himself—scornfully*]. I'll bet you it ain't 'im they shot at all, yer bleedin' looney!

LEM [*calmly*]. Dey come bring him now.

[*The soldiers come out of the forest, carrying Jones' limp body. There is a little reddish-purple hole under his left breast. He is dead. They carry him to Lem, who examines his body with great satisfaction. Smithers leans over his shoulder—in a tone of frightened awe*].

Well, they did for yer right enough, Jonsey, me lad! Dead as a 'erring! [*Mockingly*]. Where's yer 'igh an' mighty airs now, yer bloomin' Majesty? [*Then with a grin*]. Silver bullets! Gawd blimey, but yer died in the 'eight o' style, any'ow!

[*Lem makes a motion to the soldiers to carry the body out left. Smithers speaks to him sneeringly.*]

SMITHERS. And I s'pose you think it's yer bleedin' charms and yer silly beatin' the drum that made 'im run in a circle when 'e'd lost 'imself, don't yer? [*But Lem makes no reply, does not seem to hear the question, walks out left after his men. Smithers looks after him with contemptuous scorn*]. Stupid as 'ogs, the lot of 'em! Blarsted niggers!

CURTAIN FALLS

First performed by the Provincetown Players, November 1920.

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# THE UNITY OF PRODUCTION

BY CLOYD HEAD AND MARY GAVIN

**T**HE search of the theatre is toward unity of production—toward an organic fusion of movement, light, sound and stage decoration. These four factors, which together make up the theatre, are externally so unlike in expression that synthesis into a pure art-form presents difficulties which neither the old technique nor the new has thus far been able to surmount.

In the traditional method of producing serious drama we shall find that the production is the resultant of two forces—the creative impulse, concentrated chiefly in the dramatist, and the interpretive impulse, concentrated in the producer and his assistants. While practically there is room for creative interpretation within the limits of any play, however closely woven, yet the play itself, relatively speaking, is complete before it reaches any of those who are to give it life in the theatre. Interpretation inasmuch as by its nature it can merely approximate, must fall short of the author's design. It would seem therefore that unity between the written play and the interpretive production cannot ever be fully accomplished.

If we examine further into the method of the interpretive theatre, we shall find another difficulty no less important to our purpose than this discrepancy between the written play and the production, and the tendency which reflex interpretation—of life via the written play—has to inhibit the creative impulse of the artists in the theatre: the production employs a method structurally inorganic, based upon the addition of one art-form to another. These art-forms have become in expression antagonistic: acting, for example, is almost invariably realism; stage decoration is conventionalized. Jointure, often primitive and accidental, sometimes subtle and well-nigh convincing, takes the place of what we have called organic fusion.

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These antagonisms are fully recognized by the theorists of the theatre; and it is proof at least of the difficulty of reconciling them that the greatest of the theorists are compelled to seek unity through elimination. Jacques Copeau—who understands better than almost anyone else the realistic tradition—finds it essential to eliminate every medium except the actor and a permanent background. On the other hand the theorists of the new movement, preoccupied with the development of light and of stage decoration, find themselves in conflict with the actor. Gordon Craig looks to the über-marionette (the highest conventionalization of the actor) for a solution and, by inference, favors also the silent drama. Others would revive masks; still others turn toward the conventions of the Orient, toward the Noh and the Javanese drama.

It is quite true that from any of these various expedients, and from others like them—such as the welding by atmosphere of factors still unlike\*—beauty may be derived; but the one tendency which they share in common is a certain evasiveness. A valid art of the theatre is not possible through the elimination or suppression of any resource which pertains to the theatre. The theatre, if it is to come through at all, must come through as a whole.

The inferences from this brief—and somewhat cavalier—analysis as they concern our problem seem to be: that the relationship between the drama and the theatre demands at least a partial readjustment; that unity of production cannot be obtained by the external addition of one art-form to another; and that apparently in any attempt to create organic unity the actor becomes the crux of the problem.

Historically the theatre is both the oldest and the youngest of the arts. It had its origin in movement—in movement as ritual. It followed the development of ritual, incorporating into movement song; from song was born antiphony, and out of antiphony came characterization. Thenceforward drama became ever more and more concrete, ever

\* A phase of the technique of Adolph Appia.

more and more dependent rather upon words than upon movement. At the last it became essentially an art of representation between actors. So music and the dance and choral expression, which had been an integral part of the theatre, were no longer necessary to it. Instead developed drama. No artist can regret this development. It reduced the theatre, however, to a place of representation for the written play.

In the course of time drama, for its representation, recalled these various arts. But they returned, not as an integral part of the theatre. In their long dissociation they had abandoned their theatrical development. They were subsidiary arts. "Theatrical" had become a synonym for "tawdry," for the insincere: "drama" alone—and apart from the theatre—had retained its dignity.

The Wagnerian music-drama will probably mark the turning-point from which a new understanding of the theatre began. Wagner saw the necessity of, and to a large degree understood, the structural synthesis of art-forms in a free association. But, just as without him the new movement might have been long retarded, so his work preceded those technical resources in equipment by which synthesis in the modern theatre can alone be made possible. He inherited the realistic technique of stage decoration to which, without greatly modifying it, he gave an imaginative significance. This in itself forecast a new *mise en scène*. It becomes therefore significant that Adolphe Appia, who first evolved and utilized a modern system of lighting, based his experiments—and his experiments also in decoration—upon the Wagnerian music-drama. When it is said that the theatre is both the oldest and the youngest of the arts, what one implies is this: that at its origin the theatre was a synthesis from a central inspiration; but the technical equipment by which the modern theatre can hope to express, even after it has found, organic unity is scarcely older than a single generation.

There is a thread of continuity between the ritualistic theatre and the new movement in the persistence of certain

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phases of the lyric drama. As long as the drama remains lyric—as in the Orient, where lyricism is traditional—the break with these origins can fortunately never be quite complete. These origins, although the theatre cannot turn back, nor find any vitality save as a revelation of life now, are deeply suggestive. It is true that in our own time we have no ritual sufficiently dynamic to compel expression through art. But what does exist for us—the very heart of drama—is the spiritual content of life, the sources—however they may rise into fulfillment—which are the creative motives of life always. Presumably these inmost sources are changeless; and it is the business of art, unless one is mistaken, to create in conformity with them. The nearer the theatre approaches this conformity, the more vital it will become.

So we return with more than a technical reason to the most important of our three inferences: that unity cannot be derived by the artificial addition of one art-form to another. A valid art of the theatre can be sought only through an underlying principle which will govern and control all factors which contribute to theatrical expression. And inasmuch as synthesis has but one purpose, an authentic revelation of life, the principle from which organic unity is to be derived must be consonant with life-sources. This principle, the only source common alike to all art-forms, is rhythm. It is the focus where they meet, the source of the stream which finds its channel through stage decoration, through sound and through movement—as through life itself.

If we admit this fundamental thesis—and insofar as it applies to the matter in hand there can be little doubt of its truth, it may furnish a working hypothesis from which the problem of unity in the theatre can be approached with some hope of solution.

Taking rhythm, then, as the basis of theatrical technique, it becomes apparent that some revaluation of drama in its relationship to the theatre is essential. Such a revaluation is not without precedent. Dramatic technique has always been conditioned by the theatre. What distinguishes the



present from the majority of former revaluations is that the new theatre will condition not only external technique but substance as well. The inspiration out of which the play is born is the fundamental rhythm of the production. This inspiration needs, or it does not need, a theatre. If it demands a theatre for expression, then it is theatrical; if it does not demand a theatre, then—no matter how skillfully it conforms to any other definition whatsoever—it is not theatrical and should have no place in a theatrical art of which the ideal is unity.

When it is insisted that a piece to be played in the theatre must be in this meaning intrinsically theatrical, the development starts at the exact moment when the inspiration begins to seek form, at the moment from which alone unity of production becomes possible. It is a long road from the inception of the idea to the finished production. Throughout this development—expression by the most diverse media—there can be no break in the continuity of the rhythm. The evolution through the various channels must be creative always, each of the media unfolding and expanding the rhythm until it is complete and the play exists as a whole from which no factor or element can be withdrawn. Then only will a play become inextricably interwoven with the theatre and the theatre itself become a valid art-form.

Every man of the theatre would know the practical difficulty of such a program, which involves the personal as well as the aesthetic equation. Indeed it could scarcely be accomplished without a change in the viewpoint of the artist. The new movement has thus far been something of a compromise. The more skilled craftsmen are modifying their technique rather to conform with new ideas in their own crafts than with any new conception of the theatre as a whole. They are working to that extent blindly—and they must so continue to work until the theatre formulates its own individual technique. Then doubtless a new generation of artists will arise, trained to a broader understanding. Such a training will not be exclusively in their own work, but will in many respects be alike for all of them—a training

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in the method of perception as well as in the execution of what they perceive.

The resources of the modern theatre, which, though infinitely more complex, are at the present time no less definite than the resources of any other art-form whatsoever, can be utilized only by artists working in group organization. The relationship between the four major factors—stage decoration, light, sound and movement—is so sensitive, the adjustment between them so delicate, that independent effort (independence of work, not of thought) becomes almost impossible. The play must grow in the theatre itself—and the basis of a theatre group is in this matter of training chiefly. In Europe one finds that the great theatres demand a formal apprenticeship—not in the art as an art only but in the method of the particular organization of which later the artists are to become a part. This apprenticeship, however, unless one is mistaken, confines itself solely to the actors. In the older technique this doubtless is sufficient; but in the theatre where unity of the entire production is the technical *desideratum*, this apprenticeship should be shared by all artists of the organization.

Theoretically, conceiving the production as a central rhythm flowing into expression through these various channels, the basis of ensemble production is the clearing of these channels and the resultant inter-relation between them into group feeling. This cannot adversely effect the individuality of the artist; for the more clearly he makes himself a channel the more nearly unhindered will be the expression of his individuality. On the other hand clearness of perception will tend to eliminate the reliance upon personality, the personal, which is a hindrance to artistic integrity, to the creative development of the artist singly and in group organization—and is indeed perhaps the largest contributing cause to the undeniable inferiority of theatrical art. Although complete impersonality, complete clearness of perception, is beyond the reach of any artist, there is dynamic power even in the recognition of it as an ideal.

The actor, as already has been suggested, is the crux of

the problem of organic unity; and it is not flattering to the present status of the technique of the new movement that his very presence requires, as it would seem to require, justification. The other media have by their form a kind of artificial protection against the personal; but the actor, who is the direct expression of life, has become—perhaps because of that very fact—the chief channel of the personal. Now while it is true that the older technique has stressed the actor to the comparative exclusion of the other media, nevertheless the reason for this emphasis, that he is the direct expression of life, is too fundamental to be rejected. The relationship between the actor and the audience is instinctive. The actor therefore is indispensable.

This depersonalization of the actor expands, without diminishing, his function and vitality in the theatre, altering only the method, the technique, by which that function may be made clearer and more direct. Words primarily, beneath their objective purpose, are rhythm finding form through sound, just as action is rhythm finding form through movement. In this technique the words that the actor speaks and the movement visualized by him are both carried on the same rhythm that creates the light and the stage decoration.

In the personal technique, for example, only the greatest actor—who it may be instinctively feels this—can make a pause at all more dynamic than an interruption. The continuity of his performance is a continuity only of characterization. In the new technique it will perhaps become possible for the actor, by making himself a channel through which the rhythm of the production as well as the continuity of his characterization flows, to become more truly creative and to unite with the other media instead of being isolated from, and so in conflict with them.

The understanding of the laws of rhythm alone has power to release in the actor a creative vitality consonant with the other media of the theatre. And this, like the technique of all art-forms, is not to be acquired without training.

The training of the actor is a training in *rhythmic ex-*

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pression.\* Of known methods this seems to be the one which can best be adapted to his purpose. He must first clear himself of all that is personal, of those obstructions of will and conscious effort by which the channel of his inspiration is inhibited. These must definitely be broken down. Almost he must seek his inspiration beneath the conscious self in that depth which is called the subconscious and which, for our purpose, may be said to approach the universal where greater rhythms play what music they will. He must be trained by letting moods sweep through a self made wholly receptive and creating their own expression. This, as every creative artist knows, would be but a liberation, a formal approach toward those sources from which expression rises. If he trust this, disintegrating first his artificial coordination in order that he may regain a truer coordination, he will emerge an artist equipped to the uttermost of his power in the control of this medium.

Without a studio, a school of the theatre, no permanent nor organic contribution to the technique of the new movement as a whole can be made. The history thus far of the art-theatre in America should be a sufficient illustration of precisely what can be, and what can not be, accomplished at haphazard. Whether the actors are "professional" or "amateur," whether they are sincere or are making a fad of this supreme means of expression, the result has invariably been not quite accomplishment.

As we have said, the only source common alike to all art-forms, and to life itself, and therefore the source of the art-theatre technique, is rhythm. As such training applies to the actor, so too it applies to those artists whose inspiration will be expressed through lighting, for example, through music, and through stage decoration. Moreover, rhythm is the basis of group feeling, the release not only of the individual artist, but the coordination of one artist with

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\*The authors wish, for the definition which follows, to acknowledge their indebtedness to Florence Fleming Noyes. This paragraph is little more than an adaptation of her ideas, from which the reader may judge somewhat how directly important her contribution to the study of rhythmic movement may become in the development of theatrical art.

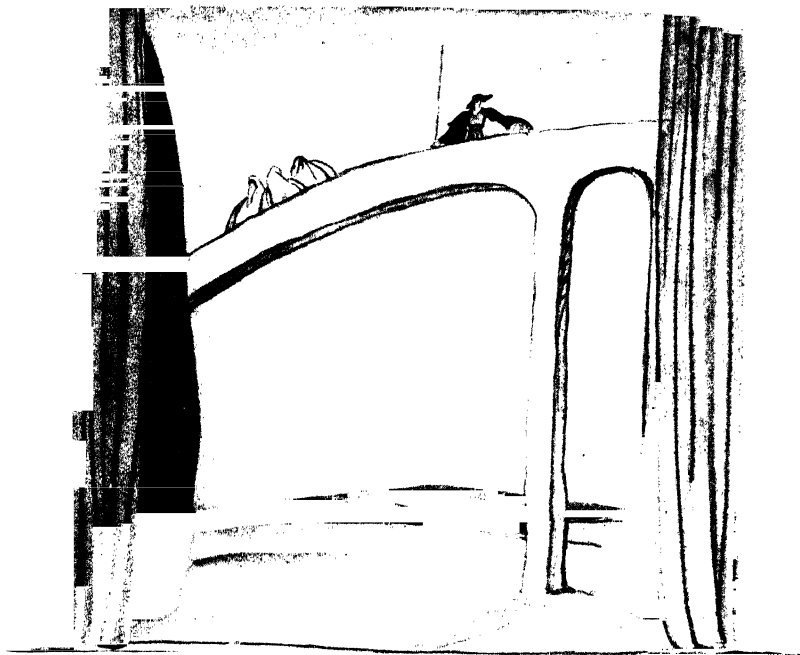
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another. A group must unify before it can separate. Through rhythm the actor, and therefore his action, has the same sensitive relationship to the *mise en scène* and the *mise en scène* the same relationship to him that the actors have to each other. This sensitization permits of that endless modification of rhythm through the influence of one artist upon another by which the entire structure of the production may be expanded harmoniously without interruption of the continuity.

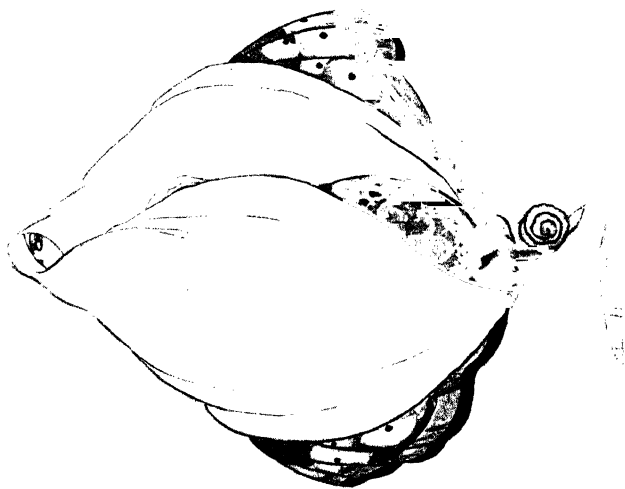
In this the actor, by virtue of the fact that he is the "living presence," whose relationship both to the audience and to the other factors is instinctive, becomes no longer the crux of a difficult problem, but the strategic center of all that is vital in the art of the theatre. For with intimacy and directness of appeal is included also that power of greater revelation which the other artists may utilize in finding their own expression.

In a former essay\* the authors have suggested that perhaps the ultimate form of theatrical art will be ensemble production. Certainly creative interpretation is but a half-way place on the road to a unified form where the unity will be organic and not a mere addition of one factor to another. The theatre has always been of the people, a cooperative and social art far beyond any other. And while the new movement may seem to many of its pioneers an aristocratic rather than a democratic form, nevertheless it may be that by working truly and in group organization, the group may find itself part of that larger group which is humanity. Then the theatre will indeed be a cooperation and the new movement justified even beyond what can be hoped for now.

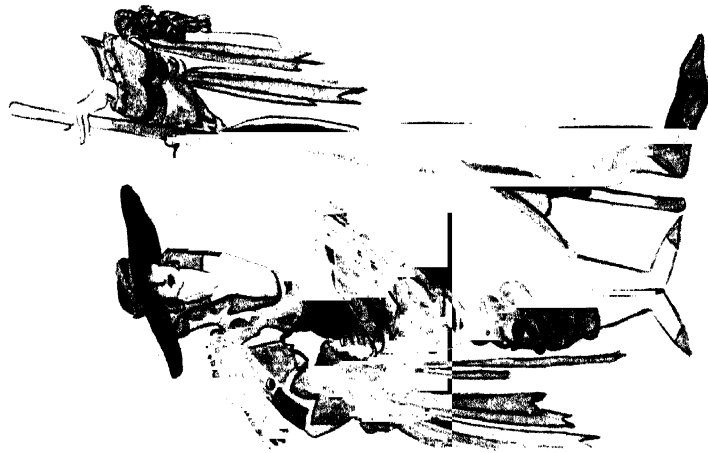
\* *Drama Quarterly*, February, 1917.



*Designs for settings and costumes by James Reynolds.* On this and the following pages we are showing a series of designs made by James Reynolds for ballet numbers in the revues staged by John Murray Anderson. The illustrations unfortunately cannot suggest the remarkable coloring of the originals, but they indicate the richness and fancy of some of the most beautiful dance interludes presented in New York in recent years. Additional plates by Mr. Reynolds appear on pages 77-78. Above is the setting design for *Pajo*, a Twelfth Century Spanish ballet in a revue to be produced by Mr. Anderson later this season.



A costume for the Twelfth Century Spanish ballet. The character enters in the costume as shown at the left, and then throws back the huge cape to form the richer effect at the right.

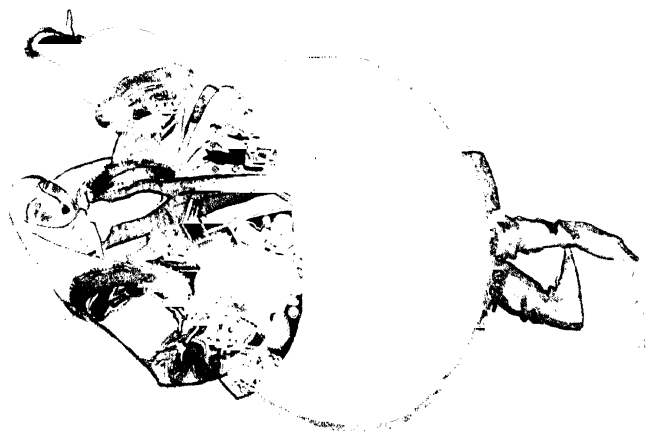


Costume for the Master of Ceremonies in *Pajo*, at left. Costume for a Duenna, at right.





At left, costume for a Young Don in *Pajo*. The large rosettes on the costumes throughout the Spanish scenes serve a dramatic as well as a decorative purpose, being thrown by the woman dancer, and gathered by the men to determine who shall be her favored lover. At right, costume for the six peasant dancers in the Venetian dance.



Costume designs for the Russian number in the *Greenwich Village Follies* now current in New York. At left, costume of the peasant dancers. At right, a Lady of the Court.



the stage and an immense tapestry hanging at the back. (Photo-  
Setting designed by James Reynolds for *What's in a Name?* The  
figures moved in localized light between a gauze at the front of  
graph by Francis Bruguiere.)

# THE YOUNGEST AMONG THE MODERNS

## JAMES REYNOLDS AS AN ARTIST IN SETTINGS AND COSTUMES

BY JOHN PEALE BISHOP

THE great accomplishment of the modern craftsman in theatrical décor, with their reliance on emotional suggestions and simplicity of design, is, it seems to me, that they have restored imagination to a place in the theatre. Their movement away from an art built entirely upon the patience of observation is all the more extraordinary when one considers that the more honest of our playwrights are still intent upon naturalism. Even a casual summing up of the considerable plays of last season shows what the courage of these young artists of scenery and costumes has been. They are still hampered in that no native dramatist, their equal in honesty and talent, has appeared to embody their principles in speech and action.

There is, however, one form of the popular theatre where the possibilities of costume and setting are limited only by the producer's purse and courage. I refer, of course, to the native revue. The revue may be by vaudeville out of musical comedy, but it has unlimited possibilities to be a delight to the eye, even when all its spending of color and light lead up to the old wheeze about Brooklyn and the ruins of America. The Broadway comedy of theatrical manners or even the serious representation of contemporary life, for that matter, must be restricted to the grays and drabs of its background, or seek the easy glitter of the modiste. The revue is without rival in what may be strictly called the popular theatre.

To the revue then, James Reynolds, after an obscure year with Stuart Walker in Indianapolis, turned, and in John Murray Anderson's *What's in a Name*, produced a series of costumes and backgrounds of fresh beauty and bewildering color. In the opening scene, a simplified arrange-

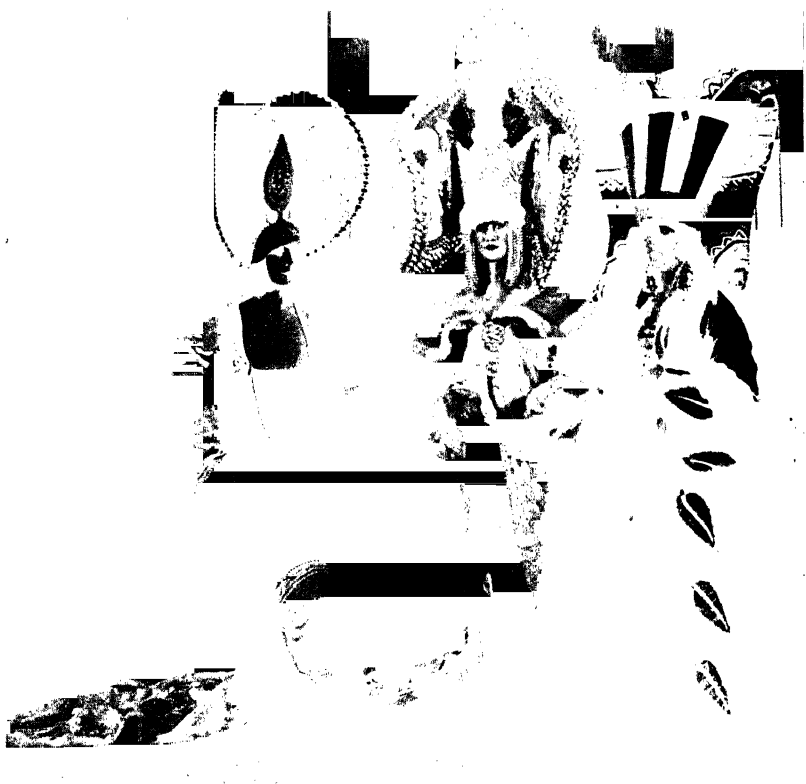
ment of blocks and pillars of silver, he used a bold device in enlisting the imagination of the audience while the setting was being changed and rebuilt before their eyes. A Japanese set was chiefly remarkable for the way in which the enormous panels of a screen after Hiroshige had been adapted to the numerous entrances and exits of the ballet. But it was in the décor for the mediaeval number that the peculiar genius of Reynolds was made fully apparent. Here, tapestries of faded colors and *Moyen Âge* figures were looped and folded to form a semicircle against which curved and retreated a stairway in wood of a rain-washed grey, ancient, half-moulded. An iron candelabra suspended a discreet radiance on a single Gothic chest and a harpsichord. Nothing else, but the whole Middle Ages had been shrewdly evoked by an imaginative selection of characteristic features, which in turn had been exaggerated to fill the picture.

The second Greenwich Village Follies, although Reynolds had been restricted to two or three scenes, showed a bolder and surer design in his settings and more mature richness in his costume. Mr. Anderson has, as should be clear by this time, a leaning toward the period ballet. Reynolds' method with these is not so much an aim at historical accuracy, as to beget an illusion, to enrich ideas already present in the audience. That is to say, in his Persian number, presumably of a period corresponding to our Middle Ages, he has evolved a fantastic world out of the prints of the period, and filled it with costumes, more Persian than Persia. Likewise, in the XVth Century Russian number, a barbarically jewelled court rubbed shoulders with the peasantry of the Russian folk tale. It is the Russia we should believe in after reading a book of fairy tales of White Russia and a court romance of one of the Ivans. This same method, I believe, he has used very successfully in suggesting the three generations of the Victorian reign in Arnold Bennett's *Milestones*, which is interesting when one considers its possibilities for a legitimate period play.

Mr. Reynolds has now gone to London with Mr. Anderson to assist in a new production at the Oxford Theatre in which the most characteristic scenes of *What's in a Name?*



Design by James Reynolds for a setting for a 14th Century Venetian number in one of John Murray Anderson's coming revues.



Three figures from the *Greenwich Village Follies* as costumed by James Reynolds. The beautiful Russian scene in this revue is built up against a negligible background almost entirely through the use of rich costumes such as these. (Photograph by Francis Bruguiere.)

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and the 1920 *Greenwich Village Follies* will be repeated along with two new numbers of which illustrations accompany this article. It may be worth while to examine them for a moment, to show the working of his mind and art in suggesting a place and period.

In the Spanish set, there is a hardness, a sense of insecurity, a background of rigid hills. Vaguely it suggests the colder of the Spanish painters, remotely El Greco's *Approach to Seville*. In the costumes, Reynolds has employed both historical knowledge of Spanish dress, and played with certain elements of that dress clearly defined in the popular mind. So out of epaulettes, heavily folded cloaks, rosettes, and the embroidered roses of the familiar shawl, all emphasized by exaggeration, he has evolved the raiment of his puppets, unmistakably, to the least informed audience, Spanish and yet free from every banality of lace mantilla, preposterous comb, and Toreador's trimming.

So too in the Venetian background, there is everything needful—the heavy sunlight, the slipping canal with its particolored pole, patterned doors sliding open on carmine interiors—a place for amorous intrigue, a little too conscious, a little too languid. "Dear dead women and such hair, too." It seems to me a beautiful, light-hearted piece of evocation.

Naturally the question arises as to the limits of his field. One can but hazard a guess. Yet his mind is constantly turning over new and yet impossible experiments. He believes with the rest of the modern, that a new form of proscenium is merely a matter of time, and that with it will come countless opportunities for the designer of stage sets as yet hardly touched upon. He also puts great reliance on the future use of lighting. Among other things he has constructed a set in which the entire scene is to be painted by shafts of colored light. One can safely pin much faith to him. His sense of color is fresh and rich, even bizarre, yet without ever seeming to strain for the bizarre. His imagination is still restless. There is great hope for him if he can find playwrights for whom observation and stagecraft are not the be-all and end-all of a play.



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### **Those Queer Mexicans**

THERE are some things happening on the Mexican border which Americans hardly suspect, but which, if they were known, might help to better understanding of the dramatic character of the average Mexican. For instance, there is *The Pastorella*, a Mexican religious pageant play performed each year on the "sacred nights," the 23rd and 24th of December, and the 2nd of February. There are twenty men required for the play, and last year only one of the twenty was in jail for smuggling when the roll-call came. All Summer and all through Autumn the rehearsals go on through the long nights, from sundown almost to sunrise, for the play itself is performed at night and the rehearsals must be in the spirit of the play. The players are Mexican field laborers; the text of the play is a "fair copy" of some old mystery play; the costumes are home-made except for a few details—a lantern, old swords and an army tent borrowed from American friends. The masks worn by the players are made of tin cans painted. And yet, with all its primitive character this Mexican mystery play, according to Mrs. Ella Pomeroy, who writes of it from Donna, Texas, carries its message of art and of religion as thoroughly and as convincingly as any play staged by experts. One of the interesting features of the performance is that the actors themselves contribute the money to pay for the script and for any expenses of production, since no money may be solicited from the audience for a sacred play. These Mexicans do have queer kinks in their morality.

### **A Falstaff Trilogy**

THE Greek Theatre of the University of California, under the direction of Sam Hume, surpassed all of its previous efforts of production in a Falstaff trilogy given in September and October. In this production Mr. Hume had the assistance of Irving Pichel and Frederick McConnell, while Gilmor Brown, Director of the Pasadena Community Players, played the part of Falstaff. The First Part of *Henry IV* dealing with the life and death of Henry, surnamed Hotspurre, the Second Part of *Henry IV* with his death and the coronation of King Henry V, and *The Merry Wives of Windsor* made up the trilogy.

Earlier in the season, the Greek Theatre produced *The Quest*, by Sidney Coe Howard, one of Mr. Hume's earlier successes in Detroit, and on October 30th in Wheeler Hall, Mr. Hume and Mr. Pichel gave a performance of Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

### **The Playwright's Playhouse**

THE Provincetown Players, after six years of steady growth have started a new season with one of their very biggest artistic successes, Eugene O'Neill's *Emperor Jones*, published in this issue and reviewed elsewhere in the issue. Their prospectus promises as good or better work than ever before. They say: "Eugene O'Neill, all but one of whose one-act plays were produced by the Provincetown Players, will have one or two new ones which will rank with his best. We will give one, or possibly two full-length plays by Susan Glaspell. We hope

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for a full-length poetic play from Edna St. Vincent Millay. Djuna Barnes has finished a new one-act play and we hope will write a long play. We are promised a dramatization of a sinewy story of the steel strike by Mary Heaton Vorse. We have plays by about a hundred writers new to our audience. Some of those likely to reach production are by Arthur Davison Ficke, Mina Loy, Aldous Huxley and Foster Damon. We have prospects of plays by Rita Wellman, Irwin Granich, Clara Savage, Don Corley, George Cram Cook, Alice Rostetter and others of our writers of past seasons." The Provincetown is distinguished from most of the little theatres by being distinctively a playwrights' group and their list of names shows how an organization that is sincerely interested in playwriting, gradually attracts to itself not only the best of the younger playwrights, but many artists well known in other branches of literature and new to the drama. It is interesting to know that *Aria da Capo*, last season's success of the Provincetown Players, by Edna St. Vincent Millay, is promising to equal the popularity of Susan Glaspell's *Suppressed Desires* (also a Provincetown play) as a Little Theatre favorite. It is on the bill of almost all Little Theatres this season.

Frederick H. Koch of the University of North Carolina and Director of the Carolina Playmakers, is the author of a pageant *Raleigh, The Shepherd of the Ocean*, recently produced by the City of Raleigh in commemoration of the tercentenary of Sir Walter Raleigh's execution.

The Everyman Theatre of London, Norman Macdermott, Director, is well under way with an interesting season of repertory, which includes: *The Foundations* and *The Little Man*, by John Galsworthy; *The Bonds of Interest*, by Jacinto Benavente; *The Tragedy of Nan*, by John Masefield; *You Never Can Tell*, by Bernard Shaw; *Romeo and Juliet*, and a Christmas production, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*.

The Community Theatre of Poughkeepsie, N. Y., the co-operative College Community Organization, has sent its first bill down to history as a success and makes the following announcement of the second bill: St. John Hankin's *Two Mr. Weatherlys*, and for children, Josephine Preston Peabody's *The Wolf of Gubbio*. The first bill included *Spreading the News*, by Lady Gregory; *Trifles*, by Susan Glaspell, and *The Princess Marries the Page*. The special performance for children was *Three Pills in a Bottle*, by Rachel Field, and *Six Who Pass While the Lentils Boil*, by Stuart Walker.

The Gardens Players of Forest Hills, Walter Hartwig, Director, played *Pomander Walk* early in the season in a natural out-of-door setting, said to be almost identical with the stage directions given by Mr. Parker for his play. The second bill of the season included: John Drinkwater's *The Storm*; *The Wonder Hat*, by Ben Hecht and Kenneth Sawyer Goodman; *Where but in America*, by Oscar M. Wolff, and *Fifty-Fifty*, by Gladys Hall and Dorothy Donnell Calhoun.

Lillian Owen, who worked and played for some time with Tony Sarg, has started a Marionette Theatre of her own with an interesting set of puppets and plays. While the Marionettes are finding their way into our

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theatre, slowly but surely, they are at the same time making their way into civic life. Prof. Dondo's Marionettes are being used for health propaganda by the State Board of Health in Kentucky and the Sage Foundation is using a Guignol in its prophylactic work abroad. We do not know what Gordon Craig will think of having his blessed Marionettes used for propaganda.

Several interesting exhibitions of stage designs are promised in New York in the near future. The Arden Studios are arranging an interesting historical exhibition of masks and mask costumes. Herman Rosse will exhibit at the Kingore Galleries in January, and the MacDowell Club is holding an exhibition of stage costumes and designs by Maxwell Armfield.

On the programs of Little Theatre groups in the district around New York are the following plays: The Beechwood Players, Scarborough, N. Y.: *Sham*, by Frank Tompkins, *The Real People*, by Charles Nirdlinger, *Aria da Capo*, by Edna St. Vincent Millay; Fireside Players, White Plains, N. Y.: *Aria da Capo*, by Edna St. Vincent Millay, *The Florist Shop*, by Winifred Hawkrige, *Campbell of Kihlmor*, by J. A. Ferguson; The Montclair Players, Montclair, N. J.: *The Workhouse Ward*, by Lady Gregory, *Trifles*, by Susan Glaspell, *Wurzel-Flummery*, by A. A. Milne; The Stuyvesant Players, New York City: *Pierrot of the Minute*, by Ernest Dowson, *Triumph*, by John McAlpin, *The Bear*, by Anton Tchekhoff.

The Community Theatre of Hollywood opened its fourth season with Ridley Torrence's *Rider of Dreams*; Barrie's *Half an Hour* and William C. DeMille's *Poor Old Jim*. The second production was *The Mollusc*, by Hubert Henry Davies, played by an all star cast of stage and film people. Three out of four of the succeeding productions for the season will be full-length plays, showing the increasing ambition and strength of this always interesting group.

Out in Salida, Colorado, there is a Community Drama group headed by Mrs. Frank M. Cochems, which has a fine record of productions, including forty-six plays, pantomimes and operas, ranging from *Antigone* to Shaw's *Pygmalion*, and from *Carmen* to *The Jewels of the Madonna*, and including such classics as *She Stoops to Conquer*, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *As You Like It* (given out of doors), Hauptmann's *Sunken Bell*, *Pippa Passes*, *A Doll's House*, *Pillars of Society*, *The Land of Heart's Desire*, *Monna Vanna*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Samson and Delilah*.

The Denver Players, under the direction of Park French, in November produced *The Golden Doom*, by Dunsany; *The Locked Chest*, by Masefield, and *Garlic*, by Walter Clappoole.

A new Little Theatre organization has been started in Miami, Fla., with Mrs. Andrew J. Hornung as President and Madame Margurete Wetzel as Director. The plays selected for the first performance are: Dunsany's *Glittering Gate*, Alice Gertenberg's *Overtones*, and *Master*, by Maude L. Hornung.

The Ypsilanti Players have made a small addition to their audience room,

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built a new scenery and property hall, published an attractive program and made plans for another successful season. Their November bill included: *The Hero of Santa Maria*, by Kenneth Goodman; *The Melon Thief*, by Shigeyoshi Obata (a Japanese farce 400 years old given in the Japanese manner), and *Something that Begins with L*, by G. M.

The Dakota Playmakers under the leadership of Franz Rickaby are hard at work again with new plays significant of the life of the neighborhood and one co-operating with the playwrights class of the University of North Dakota in a great pageant for next May.

Mrs. Roger Noble Burnham has re-organized the Lanai Players of Honolulu, the community theatre of the island, and is planning a series of five performances this winter.

The Players of San Francisco gave a performance of *Richard III* with William S. Rainey as Richard, in the Greek Theatre in Berkeley this Summer to an audience of over 5,000 people. In the early Autumn, the Players Theatre in San Francisco, under the direction of Reginald Travers, opened with a new policy, playing every night, except Sunday, with a full repertoire and changing the bill every night. The first month's repertoire included: *Hamlet* and *Richard III*; Tolstoi's *Fedya*, produced in New York as *Redemption*, *Ruddigore*, and a bill of four new one-act plays by local authors; *Charity*, by Charles C. Dobie; *The Breaking of the Calm*, by Dan Totheroth; *The Chinà King's Daughter*, by Henry Kirk, and *The White Bird*, by Majorie Driscoll.

The Little Theatre Society of Indiana, under the direction of George Sommes, opened their season with three plays: *The Proposal*, by Tchchehoff; *In Hospital*, by Thomas H. Dickinson, and *Behind a Wattcau Picture*, by Robert Emmons Rogers. Several ambitious programs are on the bill for later production, including two long plays, and Maeterlinck's *Pelleas and Melisande*, and Granville Barker's *Harlequinade*. The season will close with an out-of-door presentation of Jane Dransfield's *The Lost Pleiad*.

The State of Utah seems to have been devoting itself to Pilgrim Tercentenary pageants during the Autumn under the direction of B. Roland Lewis of the University of Utah. The University gave a special course in Pageantry for high-school teachers last Summer.

The Sylvan Theatre provided by the municipality of Pasadena for the Pasadena Community Players sheltered three large and fine productions during the Summer: *The Merry Wives of Windsor*; Josephine Preston Peabody's *The Piper*, and *Rip Van Winkle*. The first production for the season of 1920-21 at the Community Playhouse was *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm* followed in November by *She Stoops to Conquer*. The plays on the year's bill are: *Alice-Sit-By-The-Fire*, by Sir James M. Barrie; *The Comedy of Errors*, by William Shakespeare; *An Enemy of the People*, by Henrick Ibsen; *The Palace of Truth*, by W. S. Gilbert; *Androcles and the Lion*, by George Bernard Shaw, and *The Heir to the Hoorah*, by Paul Armstrong.

## THEATRE ARTS BOOKSHELF

CAIUS GRACCHUS. By Odin Gregory. Several distinguished writers, quoted by the publisher, hail this play as a work of genius; "one of the really notable contributions to the English literature of the last three centuries," and so on. Hence the reader approaches with high hopes, remembering Shelley's *Cenci*, Browning's *Luria*, and *Return of the Druses*, Tennyson's *Becket* and *Queen Mary*, not to speak of Stephen Phillips' *Herod* and *Paolo and Francesca*. He is disappointed—in spite of Mr. Theodore Dreiser's heightened introduction. Mr. Gregory had a fine dramatic story in the life of the brilliant, eloquent, magnetic tribune of the people. Caius Gracchus was a finely tragic figure. It is true that we have little reason to consider him the purely noble, unselfish, people-loving man that this play makes him out to be. And it is certainly true that he proposed to deliver the political power, not to the plebs, as in the play, but to the *equites*, the capitalists, as against the senate. But this distortion of personal character and of history is permissible in art: Shakespeare did it. The serious faults of the play lie elsewhere. It is palpably a piece of special pleading for the "people" as against the "upper classes"; every virtue, save constancy, being of the people; every vice, save none, being of the aristocracy. This is not disinterested art; and it is not convincing: it o'ervaults itself and falls upon the other side. Again, the style is wordy and banal, save for here and there a finely phrased passage. Its wooden verse is that of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century imitators of Shakespeare. Have the distinguished writers who laud this play read the so-called "poetic" drama of those times—plays that have slept for a hundred years and more in innocuous desuetude? Poetic drama, real tragedy in fine verse, is greatly to be desired; all the more to be desired, perhaps, in that it seems against the spirit of these times—because we need it all the more. But such a play as this will never get us anywhere. It has not a grain of distinction. John Masefield wrote his fine *Tragedy of Pompey the Great* in simple, colloquial prose. This play goes on stilts, and we cannot feel the humanity which it purposes to picture, through its heavy, awkward dress. Shaw wrote his *Caesar and Cleopatra* in simple, colloquial prose, and brought those faraway figures into our modern lives. Zangwill wrote his *War God* in a free, direct, almost colloquial blank verse that has lilt and individuality, yet finely fits the action. *Caius Gracchus* is a tremendously ambitious work in the most difficult and aspiring genre of literature, and perhaps it is better to try and fail than not to try at all. One finds fault not so much with the author, who at least lets his work speak for itself, as with the critics who profess to find in it qualities that so obviously are not there. (New York: Boni and Liveright.)

THE DRAGON. A Wonder Play in Three Acts. By Lady Gregory. It is pleasant to have the very author tell one just what to call a play, for she ought to know best what kind of play she meant to write. And this play is really a "wonder" play. Youngking Manus of Sorchá heard in a

## THEATRE ARTS BOOKSHELF

dream that Princess Nuala was in peril and also in need of a husband, so he came in disguise to serve her, first in the kitchen, and to rescue her from the dreadful dragon who demanded her as a sacrifice. How she came to love him, how the Dragon, immense but rather likeable at last, abjured flesh-eating; how the old queen, a very old harriidan, and the old king, very henpecked, help on the story; what real Irish fun there is in it, reminding one a bit of James Stephen's *Pot of Gold*, with a good deal of human character for all that; why it might "act" well if well acted—all this you can best find out for yourself by just reading this bit of excellent fooling. It opens a pleasant escape into the realm of fantasy in these super-serious times. (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons.)

THE BEST PLAYS OF 1919-1920. By Burns Mantle. For many years The Stage Year Book, in England, has provided a valuable annual record of all plays produced during the year, with their casts, reviews of the theatre seasons, not only in London, but in New York, Paris, and, until recently, in Berlin, and even in Russia, together with all kinds of interesting *data* about the stage. The illustrations alone, of actors and stage settings, make the volume invaluable. Mr. Mantle attempts something of this kind for the American theatre, now for the first time, but on a much less elaborate scale and without illustrations. However, he provides something lacking in the English book—a synopsis of those plays which he selects as the ten best of the past New York season. The selection is judicious and would doubtless suit the majority of intelligent theatre-goers. There is also an account of these plays and their authors; lists of plays on tour in various parts of the country; statistical summaries of "runs"; the casts of every play produced during the season in New York, with a brief account of the plot (this is the most useful part of the book) and other matter. Altogether a much-needed piece of work, and well done. If the next time Mr. Mantle will include some account of the significant achievements in stagecraft, his year-book will prove even more valuable. (Boston: Small, Maynard and Co.)

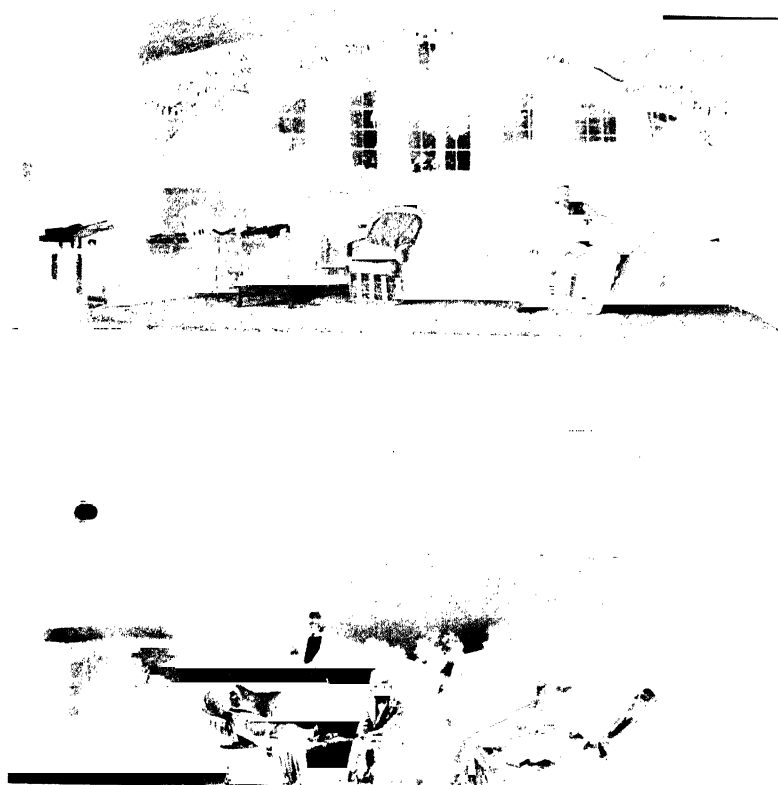
SATAN THE WASTER. By Vernon Lee. Our time has produced few, if any, more subtle, thoughtful and searching indictments of human folly in general and of war as the most egregious form of folly than this satirico-philosophic burlesque. It embodies the reaction to the World War of one of the sanest minds and most finished stylists of her day. It is really a profound analysis of human motives and human ends, of man as a destructive animal, of that innate depravity which, to save our faces, we extenalize and personify as "Satan," of good instincts perverted to evil, of the vast and horrible waste of our slender stock of virtue. Hence, *Satan, the Waster*. One who compares Romain Rolland's dramatic satire *Liluli* with this work, is struck with the similarity in purpose, in point of view, in fundamental concept, and even in their common form of cosmic burlesque. Neither the great Frenchman nor the great Englishwoman has written a "play" in the ordinary sense, for doubtless at present there is neither stage nor audience for either work, but each has made an uncommon contribution to literature. Most of Miss Paget's work is not even in dialogue form, for the play itself, which consists of the Prologue, the Ballet of the Nations, and the Epilogue, all laid in Hell, with Satan as director

## THEATRE ARTS MAGAZINE

of the spectacle and Clio, Muse of History, as Recorder, fills only one-third of the volume, the remainder consisting of philosophical comment upon the action. The play itself, however, is easy to understand, for its satire, its irony, its immense purport, are plain enough to any intelligent reader. Here again one thinks of the *Liluli* of Rolland. Of the two writers the Frenchman is the less philosophical and the more dramatic. The two together have given us perhaps the most impressive comment on the War that has yet appeared. It is a striking fact that both have chosen for their medium the dramatic form. (New York: The John Lane Co.)

**\$1200 A YEAR.** A Comedy in Three Acts. By Edna Farber and Norman Levy. Paul Stoddard, a young professor of Economics in a midland university, cannot live on his \$1200 a year salary. He leaves the refined circle of his colleagues, who professor-like submit to be starved, and gets a job in a factory, so that his pretty, well-born wife may enjoy the luxuries known to the bloated working-classes. Among the latter he becomes a leader in radical economics, and such a threat to the local magnate of the mills who, (conveniently enough for the story!) runs the university, that he is offered a salary almost large enough for one person to live on if he will drop the fight and return to the fold. He laughs at the magnate, and seems about to accept an offer of \$5000 a week from a moving-picture concern, when the play ends. Funny enough, and not quite untruthful in its pathetic pictures of the professorial struggles to be respectable on nothing a year, though not so timely as it would have been two years ago before professorial pay was slightly raised. And rather a good story, though highly illogical and incredible. Surely professors even of Paul's youth, intelligence, magnetism, good luck, and all, do not so easily dominate labor organizations, corporation magnates, and moving picture concerns, as all that! (New York: Doubleday, Page, and Co.)

**FIVE PLAYS.** By T. B. Rogers. Well-written and well-constructed one-act plays are finding their way into print in considerable quantity in England and America, but few of them reach distinction of matter or style. One cannot call them exactly poor; many are worth acting; some are even worth reading; but, in the main, they belong to the vast host of the lesser and undistinguished product which always accompanies the minimum that achieves distinction. Mr. Rogers' five plays are perhaps slightly above the tastes of the less ambitious amateur groups (but what amateur group is not now ambitious of the best?). *The Hall of Laughter*, a circus comedy of character with a vein of domestic sentiment, and *The Forfeit*, a serious play with a trite situation which takes a novel turn at the end, should "act" well, at least. *The Saint King*, most ambitious and least successful of the five plays, reads like a poor imitation of Dunsany, and would be equally tedious on the stage and in the library. *Eyes to the Blind*, however, a simple *genre* study of an old and rather selfish mother, her middle-aged son whom she depreciates at the expense of his more showy brother in the army, and a clear-sighted woman who loves the homespun son, is not only good to read but would not be out of place in any bill of one-act plays of merit and distinction. It is not unworthy to be classed with such excellent little *genre* studies as Brighouse's *Lonesomelike* and *The Price of Coal*. (London: Philip Allan and Co.)



Settings for Acts I and II of Shaw's *Heartbreak House*, designed by Lee Simonson for the production by the Theatre Guild in New York in November. The stage direction reads, "A room which has been built so as to resemble the after part of an old-fashioned high-pooped ship with a stern gallery." (Photograph by Francis Bruguiere.)

Scene from Act III of *Heartbreak House*. Setting by Lee Simonson. (Photograph by Francis Bruguiere.)



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COUNTY OF NEW YORK } ss.

Before me, a notary public in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared Edith J. R. Isaacs, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that she is one of the editors of the *Theatre Arts Magazine*, and that the following is, to the best of her knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management (and if a daily paper, the circulation), etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, embodied in section 443, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of the form, to wit:

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EDITH J. R. ISAACS.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 13th day of October, 1920.

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**MAURICE BROWNE**

## THE CENTRE OF THE STAGE THE ARTIST TAKES IT FOR LACK OF GREAT ACTORS. SOME GOOD PLAYS AND THE HOPE OF BETTER ONES

BY KENNETH MACGOWAN

IF the past three months in the New York theatre have demonstrated anything, they have demonstrated the possibility and the necessity of great acting on our stage. They might have been expected to demonstrate the power of the new stagecraft; for Robert E. Jones, Norman-Bel Geddes, and Rollo Peters have followed Lee Simonson in a series of most interesting and stimulating productions, ending with a staging of *Macbeth* by Jones that is more extraordinary and significant than any other single production which I have seen or heard of in twenty years. In the face of such work by new artists, the power and supremacy of the actor—after the playwright the chief prime factor in the theatre from the earliest days—were reasserted and reemphasised, not alone by such fine acting as Julia Arthur, Margaret Wycherly, Augustin Duncan, Carroll McComas, Lawrence Grossmith, George Arliss, William Faversham, Mrs. Fiske, and Laurette Taylor have given us, but by the consequences to Jones's *Macbeth* of the dull and tedious performance of Lionel Barrymore. The art of the theatre is not the art of the decorator—as the decorators themselves know full well. Without superb acting and superb direction, no real progress in the art is possible. America has its artists now, not many perhaps but as good in their ways as any that Europe can offer. It has some unusually good actors, and a director or two of insight and ability. But without permanent companies and repertory theatres in which these three types of talent can come to know one

another and achieve fusion, the difficulties that stand in the way of our reaching the fullest and finest art of the theatre are still gigantic.

## II.

I am convinced that *Macbeth*, as Robert E. Jones has visualized it for Arthur Hopkins' courageous revival, is essentially an epoch-making production. It is not the highest point in a developing tradition of beauty, suggestion, synthesis. It is the beginning of something new. It cuts off the past and locks the future just as surely as did *Hernani*. It has not annihilated the old tradition, as did that great first romantic drama of France, and it will be a long time before critics and public see how inevitably progress in the future must lie along the lines suggested by this production. The reason is very simple: the acting centre of the play failed to glow with the luminosity which this extraordinary production demanded. Had John Barrymore played Macbeth, had Ben-Ami acted the part, if in fact any actor of first-rate ability had appeared against Jones's backgrounds, I am certain that the evening of February seven-teenth would have been evident to everyone as an occasion of the very highest significance in the calendar of the American theatre.

Elsewhere in this issue appear reproductions of the principal sketches made by Robert E. Jones for *Macbeth*, together with two studies from models. These need perhaps two explanations. The first is philosophic, and touches Jones's purpose. Throughout his production he has attempted through significant form to create an abstract background expressing the spiritual relationships of the play. He has seen as the dominant element of *Macbeth* the abnormal influence of the powers symbolized by Shakespeare in the witches. He has tried to visualize the superhuman nature of these mystic forces in gigantic masks appearing high in the air above the blasted heath. Through the rest of the play he has placed upon the stage very simple and abstract forms to carry the mood induced by the super-

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natural influences which seize and dominate the characters constantly throughout *Macbeth*. These bits of settings are, to him, things projected by the masked forces upon the action of the play.

A second explanation must deal with the actual materials of the production. The short scenes, mainly of a narrative nature, which pass elsewhere than at Inverness or Dun-sinane, are acted at the front of the stage against a draped curtain of canvas falling in stiff folds and beautifully executed by Robert Bergman—whose painting has been so important to the success of most of the newer artists—a curtain of dully-burnished gold which takes the light in uncommonly beautiful ways. The main portions of the drama, the more important portions, are acted upon a deep stage surrounded by dimly seen black hangings. For the first scene of the witches there are only the three silver masks hanging above and three similarly masked figures in red standing motionless in a pool of light below. For most of the scenes in Inverness, Jones uses one or two sets of arches, curiously and disturbingly aslant. These develop in dramatic force as the course of the play alters. When *Macbeth* is reaching the highest point of his success the two groups seem to lunge upward and away toward triumph. In the last scenes, when he hears of the coming of Birnam wood, only one set of arches remains and it seems almost toppling to the ground. Other abstract shapes are handled similarly. For the sleep-walking scene there are a series of arched window frames set about the stage, through which and against which Lady *Macbeth* appears. The throne of the banquet scene is backed crazily by brooding and malignant shapes. All these elements are handled in the barest and simplest grays, with an occasional dull red like the backing of the throne. They are lit by sharp beams of light that come, as it were, from the spirits in the void and make patterns of the air. The costumes are of the simplest materials and of primary colors; yet never has Jones shown more power and beauty in such work.

From the settings alone, I carry away three impressions.

First, from the front scenes and from the costumes and the clear cut, exactly finished quality of the whole production, a sense of absolute beauty. Second, from the sleep-walking scene, an unearthly impression of a pearly dream-world such as I have never had. Third, from the dominating shapes of the bits of setting a sensation of terrible, overpowering obsession. These are the shapes that suggest not realities but unconscious forces. The characteristic form employed is the distorted gothic arch. Repeated in shields, conical helmets and spears, it is like the dull point of a murderous dagger. Twisted as it is, it impresses upon the mind the deadly and thwarted ambition with which the sisters obsess Macbeth.

Of the purpose of Jones there is nothing to be said. He has merely set out to give us scenery to suggest an emotional idea, instead of a physical reality. By so much he has cut off sharply from the methods and ideals of the whole new movement in stage decoration. His method is an abstraction of spiritual reality. The only measure of it can be its success in achieving what it sets out to do.

On that score there must be many reservations. Personally, I believe that Jones erred in his method of keeping the super-human and dominating quality of the forces of the heath before us. I think he should have concentrated more attention on the masks. I think the witches should have been practically invisible; or at most only as dim as they appear in the tongue of flame which mounts in the cauldron scene. Doubtless in the first scene on the heath he wished to insist on the identity of the red figures and the large masks, by similarly masking them. Actually, our pre-conceptions as to the appearances of the witches and Shakespeare's own lines of description jar frightfully with the bird-like figures in red. If only the masks in the air were clearly seen, and if they were retained as visible, dominating symbols above all the other scenes of the play where the influence of the witches is felt, I think the whole idea of the production would be much more clearly evident. You will note from the sketch of the banquet scene that it was appar-

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ently Jones's intention to use the masks in this manner for this particular episode. That he did not do this and repeat the effect in other scenes, seems to me one of the blunders that make the production as a whole puzzling and inconclusive to so many.

These are the only blunders of Jones's. The rest must be charged to acting and direction. In general the fault of Arthur Hopkins's direction is the fault of too slow a pace and too static a treatment of the people on the stage. This is only a fault perhaps because of the still greater fault of the leading actor, Lionel Barrymore. If he possessed the spiritual fire and strength that the part demands, the slow pace might not be evident. Certainly if he did not give so absolutely tedious and unimaginative a performance, ~~rew~~ would find the background anything but an exciting and immensely stimulating part of the drama enacted. As it is, Barrymore plods heavily through the long play, dwelling endlessly on every vowel, never for a moment simulating any natural emotion appropriate to Macbeth. It is his Neri of *The Jest*, sobered a bit and shorn of his more intriguing violence. It is a performance on a dead level. Macbeth's moments of terror and anguish seem hardly more than heavier accents of a slow and laboriously rumbling beat of the voice. Audiences that came looking for a Macbeth and a Barrymore were cheated of their satisfaction and fell back on cursing the settings. Never had a production called so for acting or been so ready to support it and raise it aloft; but without such acting, never was a production so vulnerable to popular prejudices.

The truth of what I say was clearly evident I feel in the response of the audiences to those moments when Julia Arthur had the stage and the action to herself. Her performance is by no means inspired; it does not partake of the true quality of the spiritual obsession of the setting. But it is fine enough to show, in the quick response of the audiences, that real acting could have turned Jones's work from a liability into an asset so far as the popular reaction goes. This is even clearer, perhaps, in the case of E. J.



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Ballentine's very fine performance as Malcolm. But I cannot help feeling that if Barrymore could only do as much with his part as the rest of a generally excellent cast do with theirs, it would be enough to carry this production to a remarkable and an epoch-making success.

### III.

Two others of the productions of the past few months in which new methods of staging have figured raise mingled doubts and hopes. The importance of the actor in Shakespeare received an even clearer endorsement in the case of Constance Smedley Armfield's and Maxwell Armfield's "synthetic" mounting of *The Winter's Tale*. Except for perhaps two of the women, the actors were so weakly assertive and unskilled as to leave the oddities of the production glaringly apparent. These oddities were in themselves rather good. Certainly Maxwell Armfield's costumes were in the main excellent. The scheme of making a simple and economical production by hanging the stage in gray curtains, with a raised platform along the rear wall and steps leading down, has much to be said for it. The director thus achieved interesting levels for the action to proceed upon, and made the most of the opportunities thus presented for beautiful groupings. Also, the difference in place and mood between Leontes' court and rustic Bohemia was skillfully indicated by altering the position of the steps and adding two simple touches in color, while the play retained unity in setting through the continued use of the gray curtains. I think, however, that the lighting was never very good and that the height of the platform was far from fortunate in relation to the height of the set. The "synthesis" was no more evident than in the productions of Hopkins and Jones, however much it may, have outdistanced the fusing of action, word and music in the productions of Al Woods.

Similar criticisms of a minor technical nature may be made of Rollo Peters' settings for *The Prince and the Pauper*. The use of the false proscenium and inner stage

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never seem in proper relationship until the final scenes. Peters has used for his central opening the arch of "perpendicular" architecture, and has made it so low and so wide as to create a heavy, broken-backed effect, by comparison with the narrow arches of the same height at either side. When he raises his arch in the last scenes, the relief is electrifying. I feel also that, while his costumes throughout are extremely good, the color of the earlier scenes is dead and depressing beyond words. Perhaps that is realism to Elizabethan England. But at any rate it is not romance. And romance is the soul of *The Prince and the Pauper*.

### IV.

In a realistic play, *Mixed Marriage*, an earlier work by St. John Ervine, first presented in New York by the Irish Players and now revived, following the vogue of *Jane Clegg* and *John Ferguson*, Rollo Peters clears away the faltering impression made in Mark Twain's romance. His setting is quite the best kitchen, in line, tone and dramatic arrangement, that I have ever seen. His acting, too, as the Belfast boy whose love for a Catholic girl brings tragedy to the people of the play, is fine enough to recall his exceptionally beautiful and moving performance in *The Faithful* over a year ago. With Peters goes perhaps the best all-round cast and direction that any realistic piece has had this season. Augustin Duncan, both as director and as actor of the principal part, is admirable. Margaret Wycherly as the old mother who looks with an understanding and rather rueful eye at the pigheadedness of men—and an excellent part it is!—gives a finely shaded and remarkably moving impersonation. It is acting of such genuine quality as to make one wonder that such a talent should have had little or nothing to do in the American theatre during its best years.

The play itself is a dour and well-built tragedy of religious bigotry. It pictures with great exactness the people from whom Ireland has built part at least of the hell in which she now suffers. The Ulster and Catholic conflict

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is poignantly stated. Still more poignantly, it fails, by the smallest chance, of being resolved; but it is a chance on which rests fundamental human nature. The play is not so good as *John Ferguson* or *Jane Clegg* in certain respects, though it is rather better built, superficially speaking. Its ending is adventitious tragedy needlessly added to the genuine. There is no necessity but that of the older theatre, for the betrothed girl to go out into the deadly storm of missiles which have already wrought spiritual havoc about and in her.

### V.

Lesser demonstrations of the dominant position which the new stagecraft has won, are offered by the revival of *Erminie* with settings by Norman-Bel Geddes and the importation of *The Beggar's Opera*, as mounted in London by Nigel Playfair and C. Lovat Fraser. For *Erminie* Geddes has provided the most beautiful and effective costumes and settings which any musical comedy in twenty years has been blessed with. The peculiar virtue of his work on the scenic side is the boldness and freshness with which he has frankly utilized paint and canvas. His settings are almost white in their dominant tone, with single colors underlining windows, doors or roofs in bold strokes handled rather in the "expressionist" vein, which has crept into German commercial work since the war.

*The Beggar's Opera*, the first worthy production to fail this season—and largely, I think, through mistakes of management—is a very gay old musical show full of charming old English tunes, and some rather pertinent satire on the ways of thieves yesterday, today and forever. It was excellently sung and acted, and in London proved another *succès de surprise* in the same out-of-the-way theatre that housed *Abraham Lincoln*. An interesting aspect of this importation was that it brought us the work of one of England's best designers of costumes and settings, C. Lovat Fraser. The tone and conception of the production were in the main excellent, but in detail it clearly fell short of

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our own best work. The proportion of arches to walls and the use of crude plastic lanterns against door-lights painted in the flat were bad.

### VI

*In Deburau* David Belasco has put himself ahead a very long pace. To begin with he has at last chosen a play worthy of the care and money which he has lavished on very trivial matter since *The Phantom Rival*, *The Easiest Way* and *The Concert*. *Deburau* is the work of the brilliant young Parisian playwright, actor and producer, Sacha Guitry, who is better known to America through one of his triangular farces, *Sleeping Partners*, and through the reputation of his distinguished father, the actor Lucien Guitry. This play, like his *Paste*, is a biographical drama of an elevated and entirely serious quality. It tells a fable of the life of the famous French pantomimist Deburau, of the early nineteenth century, his love affair with the original of the Lady with the Camelias, and his failure and retirement from the stage in favor of his son. The first and last scenes, which take place in the little old Théâtre Funambules, hold almost all the real quality of the piece. The two central acts are "filling," not half so picturesque or moving. The last act in particular stirs imagination and emotion, for in this Guitry gives words of advice to the actor which are probably the finest that any player-playwright has written since Shakespeare; personally, I am inclined to think it is better than the much-quoted lines of *Hamlet*. The play has been translated by Granville Barker in a rhyming verse of great irregularity, that seems less apt and skilful as one looks back upon it.

In the main the play is acted and produced with a great deal of flavor. Lionel Atwill, who played in Arthur Hopkins's revivals of Ibsen, plays Deburau—a most difficult part—with a certain distinction that very few American actors could achieve. Only John Barrymore or Ben-Ami or a player of the legitimate with the pantomimic genius of Charles Chaplin could better it. Its lack is the flashing

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and sinuous quality of the French mime. Behind Atwill is a production careful and beautiful to the last inch. It is not at all old-fashioned in the way that is commonly thought to be Belasco; yet one longs ever and again for a single figure or a single effect to stand out starkly and arrestingly. The beauty is too enveloping.

### VII

Certainly there is no envelope of beauty about *Mary Rose*, the new and mystical play by Barrie in which Ruth Chatterton devastatingly appears. The direction and production are old-fashioned and tiresome, except for the dim opening scene. The fantastical island, from which the heroine vanishes to remain away twenty-five years, is simply unbelievable. And the performance of Miss Chatterton falls into the same monstrous category. The pleasure of the play itself—the mystical quality which Barrie has captured in his introduction and in his main idea, the disappearance of a human being for a long period of time,—is very much diluted by tedious sentimental and “whimsical” passages in the manner of Barrie at his worst. The play is distinguished, in one respect at least, by the excellent playing of Tom Nesbit in the triply difficult part of an Australian soldier and his own father at two different ages.

### VIII.

The qualities of production which might have done much for *Mary Rose* are quite as absent from a greater play which stands in even greater need of them, *Eyvind of the Hills*. This product of the so-called Icelandic Renaissance, a finely imagined and poetically written tragedy of outlawry and of bleak and terrible uplands, has a vigor and a barbaric cruelty about it which neither acting nor production completely catch. Livingston Platt, who designed the settings, acquired something of Roerich's color and character in his one interior set; but, so far as his exteriors go, he would have done far better than he has if he had literally copied some of those cold and almost mystical landscapes

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which the Russian artist showed in his recent exhibition of stage designs and easel paintings. Platt's mountains belie the very spirit of the play as well as the place.

Excellent as is Margaret Wycherly in many moments of *Eyvind*, and finely as she feels the part of this Viking woman who goes off to the mountains with the lover whom fate has outlawed, she does not get into the play quite the sweep of primitive passion that its author, Johann Sigurjonsson, achieves in his vivid prose. The remainder of the cast falls behind Miss Wycherly in power and direction.

### IX.

Turning to the American playwright, we find at least two pieces of distinction among the quarter's plays. They are very different in quality and substance—Zona Gale's own dramatization of her novel, *Miss Lulu Bett*, and Eugene O'Neill's newest tragedy, *Diff'rent*. Neither seems entirely satisfying, yet in each there is much that must be ranked very high in our theatre. Certainly, the thought of either piece being written or acted ten years ago is so absurd as to be most heartening to anyone who looks for an American theatre of the first rank.

As a novel, *Miss Lulu Bett* seemed a small masterpiece. Its pictures of Middle Western middle class types were cameo-clear. These narrow-minded husbands and wives, these dimly awakening women who struggle through domestic slavery to something like freedom, these pert children and half-dead grandmothers, they are authentic parts of American life. In her novel Miss Gale saw them sharply and exactly and gave a doubly ironical comment upon them.

As a play *Miss Lulu Bett* is still a mine of true characterization. Indeed old Mother Bett lives more truly on the stage than in the book. Miss Gale has added a moment of reflection on how little life has touched the old woman that is really magnificent. But, in general, much as our theatre needs this sort of true-talk and this sense of real character, the play fails in one important point. It has not

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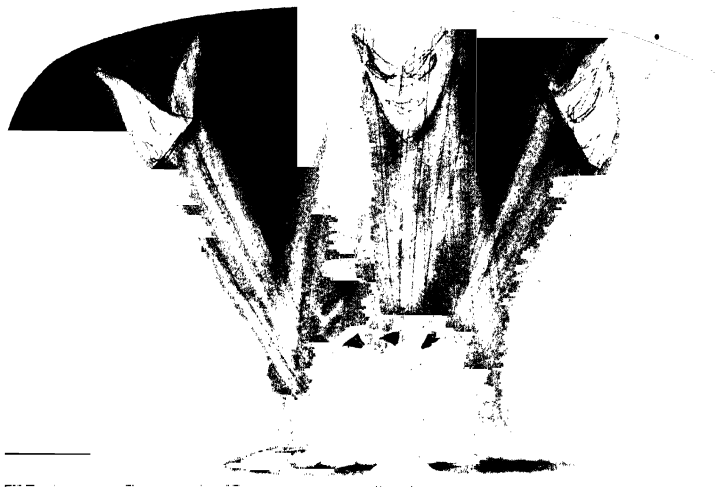
enough sense of movement. It seems a series of excellent portraits and deliciously ironical moments, rather than a mounting drama. Perhaps this is because the crisis in Lulu Bett's life, the moment in Savannah, when her husband tells her that his former wife may be still alive, is not depicted on the stage. If it were, the play might gain quality by seeming to build up to it and away from it.

Brock Pemberton, that valuable addition to the ranks of the younger producers, who gave us *Enter Madame*, has supplied a cast and a direction excellent in all respects but one. The oily hypocritical husband of the book becomes in the hands of the player a type-portrait of the conventional, hard-hearted father of melodrama. Lulu herself, however, is played with the greatest skill by Carroll McComas; Louise Closser Hale does much with the old lady, and Lois Shore is very good indeed as the child Monona.

### X.

*Diff'rent* is utterly of the theatre in the best sense. The reservations that one may make are not reservations as to its effectiveness. Eugene O'Neill has again written that strong, simple, direct and truthful dialog in which he excels every other American playwright. Again he builds up an unerring drama from the premises which he selects. I only wonder if the play, in spite of the praise it has won, is at all to be compared in quality and purpose with *The Emperor Jones* or the best of his previous work.

It is one of O'Neill's circular studies of the fate that follows upon human weakness or wrongheadedness. In this case a first act shows us a girl refusing love because of a too finicky judgment of a man's very innocent slip, and a second act brings us to the woman, thirty years later, touching degradation and tragedy when her suppressed desire for love overwhelms her moral sense and sets her courting a degenerate young rotter who is trying to snatch at her money. The effects that O'Neill secures are powerful and they seem in the last analysis truthful. But what are such morbid emotions beside the deeper and more vivid spiritual



First Scene of the Witches.  
*When shall we three meet again?*

Designs and models by Robert Edmond Jones for Arthur Hopkins' production of *Macbeth*, described and analyzed on page 92. Of this work Mr. Jones has written: "These drawings illustrate a tendency to break away from the pictorial conventions of scene-painting made famous by the great European decorators, and to substitute in their place abstract highly conventionalized arrangements of form and color and light which aim not so much to please the eye as a picture as to give continuous support to the action of the drama. These settings are pure theatric creations, having nothing to do with actual period or place. They may prove to be interesting in their relation to a new form of drama which will deal directly with the realities of vision."





The Letter Scene.  
*Lady Macbeth.* "*They met me in the day of success.*"

## THE CENTRE OF THE STAGE

qualities which he touches in *The Emperor Jones*? The "lesson," if O'Neill would care to tie to a lesson, is good enough, but I cannot help feeling that all this matters little beside the vision that he has given us elsewhere of the future of the American drama. In the first act of *Diff'rent*, in the exposition which pictures the South Sea Islands and the naked women in the sun, O'Neill strikes a lyric note which will lead him far when he turns in the direction of *The Emperor Jones* rather than of *Diff'rent*.

The play is acted by the Provincetown Players with a good deal of conviction. Even the extraordinarily difficult part of the girl, who must range from 16 to 46 and from maidenly modesty to a pitiful spectacle of unashamed pursuit, is not too much for Mary Blair. Perhaps it is a part which no one woman can completely compass; but Miss Blair does surprisingly well with it. Charles Ellis makes the rotter the best piece of acting of its sort that I remember seeing in many seasons.

### XI.

The quarter has not been without its lighter entertainment worth attention. Perhaps the best light comedy that has come from England this season is *The New Morality*, the work of an American expatriate, Harold Chapin, who died in the war. It is a deft and amusing comedy on feminine violence and feminine wiles, illumined by one magnificent bit of philosophic fun-making in the long speech of an inebriate. This difficult part is played with real distinction by Lawrence Grossmith. Grace George, who mounted the play for matinees, is excellent, and has the good support of Ernest Lawford.

No English melodrama in years has been quite so exciting and worthwhile as William Archer's maiden-effort, *The Green Goddess*, in which George Arliss and Ivan Simpson do some very excellent work as a rascally rajah and his English body-servant. The melodrama is tense without being particularly novel, while the ironic comedy of the rajah's comments on western civilization *versus* east-

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ern barbarism is almost as good as the two-edged satire of *The Bad Man*.

The quality of Kummer is surely never strained. This astonishing figure in our theatre was never more oddly humorous of line than in *Rollo's Wild Oat*, a rather whimsical comedy about a rich young man who tried to satisfy his only ambition, to play Hamlet. Roland Young, as the man, and Lotus Robb, as an Ophelia who would rather not act, are as amusing a couple as the stage has displayed this season.

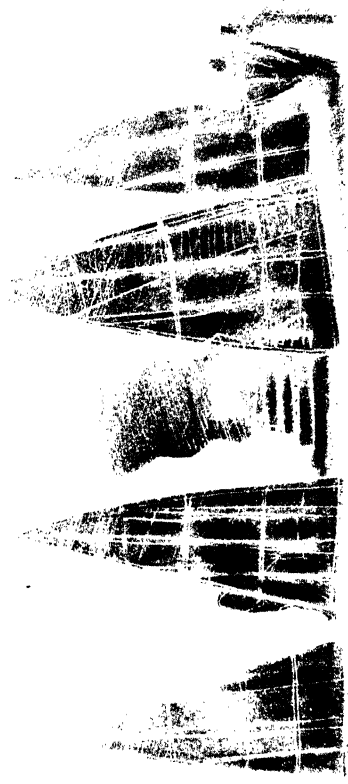
### XII.

Perhaps the most interesting incident of the past three months, except for certain exhibitions of theatrical designs which must be described in the next issue, has been the development of special matinees. Such performances first brought to the attention of Broadway a large number of the plays commented upon above, *The Winter's Tale*, *Mixed Marriage*, *Diff'rent*, *Eyvind of the Hills*, *The New Morality*, as well as *The Emperor Jones*. Until we organize permanent companies in which the fitness of a man like Lionel Barrymore for a part like Macbeth can be tested before actual performance, we shall have to rely more and more upon matinee productions to give us novelties and to curb to some extent the economic waste in our costly theatre sites. From the announcements of plays that are to be thus introduced to us, it looks very much as if the matinees were to supplant the bookshelf as a substitute for the repertory theatre.



The Banquet Scene.  
*Macheth. Take any shape thou wilt. . . .*

*By the pricking of my thumbs,  
Something wicked this way comes.  
Open locks!  
Wherever knocks!  
The Cauldron Scene.*

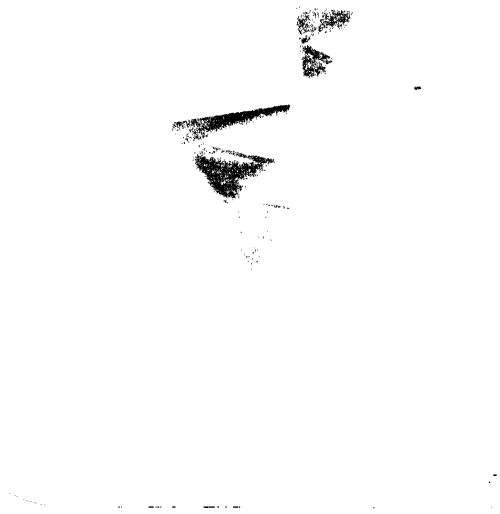


The Sleep-Walking Scene.  
*Doctor. This is her every guise, and, on my life, fast asleep!*



Dunsinane.

*Macheth. They have tied me to a stake! I cannot fly!*



The Letter Scene. A preliminary arrangement of the model.





The Sleep-Walking Scene. A preliminary arrangement of the model.

# AMERICAN PRODUCERS

## I. MAURICE BROWNE

BY RALPH ROEDER

THE Little Theatre movement has been by many considered a cult. How justly? Those who in its defense would attempt to reckon its present fruits might point out that it fulfilled its function in impregnating the established theatre against which it reacted with something of its impulse and principles, and that it is there that one must look for whatever it brought forth of lasting value. Its most recognizable contribution has been, of course, in the field of scenic reform. Nor is it in any spirit of minimizing the many brilliant performances we have witnessed in this field that one may add that, in the very nature of things, this was the easiest campaign; easiest because of the isolated novelty of the reform and the indefensible meanness of the scenic practices it overthrew, and easiest above all because matter and not human nature was here the artist's medium, in which he was free to work his will without other limitations than his own. If the Little Theatre movement then is finally to be justified beyond this, it must be because it unearthed talent in writers, actors, and, perhaps most important of all at this juncture, directors. Has it?

Here the answer will be returned more slowly, the evidence being still forthcoming, and the medium human nature—by a sorry deal less tractable than pigment and calcium. This article is concerned with a director. In November, 1912, the Chicago Little Theatre was opened; it was closed in December, 1917. In the spring of 1921 its founder, Maurice Browne, is producing in New York for Margaret Anglin's Euripides' *Iphigenia in Aulis* and, in alliance with her, Claudel's *The Tidings Brought to Mary*. To those who have followed his career and that of his theatre the significance of this will be apparent: he is producing to-

day in the open forum the type of play which his theatre was founded in the by-ways nine years ago to experiment with. He is producing these plays by the side of one of the most discerning and courageous of our recognized artists; and one of the few professionals that the movement developed is therefore now in a position, though arduously alone at the goal, to respond or rather to continue the response, which he began with his production in New York last spring of the *Medea*, to the expectations which his past work has aroused. With a wider field to draw on, certain limitations of material that have irked him in the past may be expected to disappear, though the problems of assimilation of his new raw material will in all human probability be gradual of solution. The ways of artistic growth are not, happy myth, a sowing of Cadmus' teeth!

A list of the plays\* he produced at the Chicago Little Theatre and a consideration of the way in which he produced them and of the theories that have resulted from (n. b., not preceded) that experience tell his story as an artist. Common sense and imagination ("Common Sense, that greatest gift to Beauty") characterize gratefully both his theory and practice. The announcement of the Chicago Little Theatre, after its first year of existence, read: "A repertory and experimental art-theatre, producing classical and modern plays, both tragedy and comedy, at popular prices, was opened on November the twelfth, 1912; preference is given in its productions to imaginative plays, deal-

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\* *Chicago*. 1912-1917.—Euripides: *Medea*; *The Trojan Women* (Gilbert Murry's translations); Sygne: *Deirdre of the Sorrows*; Shaw: *The Philanderer*, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, *Candida*; Ibsen: *Hedda Gabler*; Schnitzler: *Anatol* (Granville Barker's version); St. John Hankin: *The Charity That Began at Home*; Cloyd Head: *Grotesques*; Rupert Brook: *Lithuania*; Alice Brown: *Joint Owners in Spain*; W. B. Yeats: *Shadowy Waters*, *On Baile's Strand*; Maurice Browne: *The King of the Jews*; W. W. Gibson: *Women-kind*. *Salt Lake City and Seattle*. 1918-1920.—Ibsen: *The Doll's House*; Besier: *Don*; Barrie: *The Professor's Love Story*; Gordon Bottomley: *King Lear's Wife*; Masefield: *The Locked Chest*; and the pantomime known as *The Chicago Little Theatre Christmas Pantomime*.

The above is a partial list only, to indicate the range of the repertory. It does not include puppet productions, a field of experiment which Ellen Van Volkenburg (Mrs. Browne) made her own. Altogether Maurice Browne has made between seventy and eighty productions in America.

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ing primarily, whether as tragedy or comedy, with character in action." This laconic and dignified statement of policy says everything. To begin with, the vital system of an art-theatre is seen to be repertory; and though, in Chicago, he was able to introduce this system only in a modified form of short runs and occasional revivals, like that of the Theatre Guild at present in New York, on tour he fulfilled this pledge literally. Further, it is an experimental stage and this word is employed obviously not only to indicate its progressive tendencies, his hope of evoking fresh manifestations in writing, acting, and designing (a hope not entirely unrewarded), but gracefully to invite the co-operation of that other essential factor in the theatre, his audience. For them it should take any forbidding sting from those formidable words, "repertory" and "classical plays"; his experiment was with them and with himself, it was tentative, and he would lay himself frankly at their mercy. If, as it proved, their mercy was such that he had to fight it, he could do so, as he subsequently showed, cheerfully, reasonably, obstinately, with unwavering faith in an eventual audience for the plays he believed in. His humor and humanity steadied him in difficult times. He was confident that for the plays of Euripides and Synge there was an audience on Lake Avenue as there had been in Athens and Dublin. In a pamphlet which he wrote at this time as "a plea for an American art-theatre" he concludes a description of the structure and policy of such a theatre in these words: "There is your theatre for you. Now, I suppose you want to know who play there and what they play and to whom. Well, I will answer your last question first: they play to average American men and women, without overmuch money and brains, but with a great deal of that splendid, pitiful, underrated quality which is common to all—ordinary humanity; they play, in fact, to your cousins and to my aunts and to Mrs. Lake Avenue's cook's young man, to store clerks and college professors and club-women and policemen and members of the Drama League of America and elevator boys, to all who are compact, as

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you and I, and they are all compact, of laughter and tears and the divine childish gift of 'let's pretend.' " It is the same creed that he has expressed elsewhere in a verse called *Creation*:

The child blows bubbles and breaks them.

God scatters stars and shakes and remakes them.

And the poet takes God and the child for his play:

for laughter and tears he takes them.

It is a creed that has taken him far, that can carry him to the end; from it springs the vitality of his work and his thought.

A repertory and experimental art-theatre, "producing classical and modern plays, both tragedy and comedy . . ."—in this eclectic program wherein was his theatre different from others founded for the same purpose? The following phrase answers that: "At popular prices." And at popular prices it was continued during its five years of life, that it might reach its true audience. This involved burdens and sacrifices which only those who bore them with him can appreciate. It was no toy of a dilettante, this theatre; it laid on its creator a monastic rule of poverty and abnegation. Not altogether fancifully, nor without the knowledge of what he was speaking of, did he in a later essay urge that "it would seem imperative to-day . . . that some body of men and women should dedicate themselves to the service of beauty *and to poverty*. Poverty, not merely simplicity! . . . The artist dedicated to poverty strips himself unflinchingly of every material possession other than those that are essential to his life and to his work. Any one who has ever done such a thing, in however small a degree, is aware of that sense of liberty and the open air which comes with each rejection. . . . It is not unjust to emphasize the freedom, the joy and opportunity for work which that order would bring to its individual members, still less the collective creation which it would urge into being." The beggarly sum which the director allowed himself and his partner to live on in these days would seem incredible in quotation; but inadequacy of

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means was never heard to irk him except in so far as it hampered his work. At the close of the pamphlet appealing for the theatre of his desire he calls this experience "the finest training-school in the world, for it breaks hearts and spirits, and crushes out hope and ambition, and only the strongest survive, those to whom their work is more than their life, so that, when the wise millionaires come at last, as they came to the Players of Moscow and Dublin, they bring, not regular meals and unpatched boots, but a real spotlight in place of the tin funnel that had to serve before, and a new costume of Deirdre. How many understand these things? How many know the thrill that comes from accomplishing one's end with utterly inadequate materials? The thrill—and the soul-sickness. . . . Yes, it's a pretty good training-school for a young man with a low stomach and a high heart; one of these days one of him will find he has a sense of humor as well, and then—then America will have its first art-theatre."

Finally, though his program was eclectic—and the repertory of the theatre is there to prove how catholic were his tastes, how broad his sympathies—his own preference is frankly stated: "preference is given in its productions to imaginative drama." Here we reach rock-bottom. It is the poet's choice for the truth of vision as against the verisimilitude of realism, a subject on which he speaks eloquently in these essays. But again and reassuringly, the high-hearted young man with a sense of humor and the practical man of the theatre appear: "dealing primarily, whether as comedy or tragedy, with character in action." The grasp on the essentials is complete: above all drama, and if it is poetic, that it may be the more human, the more universal.

Here, theoretically at least, the producer of such drama stands before one. The writer of that program is obviously a man of vision and of character; of modesty and that tact which it begets, humor; of common sense and broad culture; and a practical man of the theatre. How has his practise corresponded to that impression? How was he

equipped for such a task? In this cosmopolitan America of ours he was an Englishman of Irish extraction (the visionary and fighting Irish)—Gordon Craig has tilted at him teasingly as “the Englishman of Chicago.” Educated at Cambridge, a member of the group known as the Georgian poets, he had knocked about the world from the Himalayas to the Olympics, a man who had been many things in his time, publisher, teacher, rover, before he found his true vocation in the theatre; but once found, he mastered his medium with a rapidity that only those born for it attain. In this combination, so rare and so desirable, of the poet and the practical man of the theatre lie his uniqueness and his promise. And how related they are it needs such an example to show.

Was it the poet or the other who seized immediately in theory and practise on the prime essential of his craft—essential in any art—rhythm? So obvious and so neglected an essential in the majority of even our most studied productions! Perhaps the actor alone, the good actor, is always instinctively true to it in the theatre. The designers who have seemed “new” have but rediscovered and applied the old truth; color and line, in relation and spacing, they have conceived rhythmically. The director, who, above all, must grasp and relate the rhythms of all the inter-dependent elements of production, has seemed least aware of his obligation and opportunity. But name those who have done so and you will name the eminent. The eminent have succeeded, for the most part, however, with realistic material. A different ear, and a rarer, is needed for the interpretation of poetic drama. It was perhaps the prompting of this musicianly ear attuned to a passionate sympathy for the grandeur of their humanity and their glowing theatricality, that turned Maurice Browne from the beginning to the production of the tragedies of Euripides.

In an essay published in *The Drama* (November, 1914, and February, 1915) entitled *The New Rhythmic Drama*, he analyzes the formal elements of this type of production. This body of aesthetic is the first contribution to that field

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by an artist of the new theatre in America; it presents, moreover, the always rare and ever admirable spectacle of an artist of strong and true instincts apprehending and formulating those instincts consciously unto himself.

"Fluid idea in appropriately conventionalized form constitutes rhythm.

"Rhythm is a basic principle of all the arts.

"Drama is the rhythmic fusion of movement, light and sound."

Probably the most complete expression that he has so far given to these principles has been in his productions of the *Medea* and the *Trojan Women* of Euripides. The rhythm of the dramatic scenes took care of itself naturally in the acting; but in the handling of the chorus he made his most creative contribution, and this he now feels to be the one significant result of these years of work. He made it an integral part of the dramatic scheme; and in the evolutions of the chorus he achieved and developed group movement. Treated hitherto statically, like an orchestra in the intervals of the action and the commentator to a narrative, he inwove it in the very substance of the play; it flowed and followed, like the wave, its surge and swell; it *moved*, it danced, it acted. One critic, writing of the *Medea*, perceived this, when he wrote: "Here were six mobile, supple, rhythmic figures, who gestured with their arms, with their frames, with their robes, which seemed themselves to be only gestures of the protagonists, to be extensions and excursions of Medea's soul. Whether Greek or modern, this is poetry in spectacle." He might have added that it was drama as well. For though that six-fold unity moved always plastically and pictorially, its responses, individually and as a body, were primarily dramatic. The lines allotted to it were broken up among its members, caught and tossed and flung to and fro in panic or premonition or warning or relief, as the mood demanded. Those progresses of the action during which it was mute it followed with pantomimic obligato; in the interludes, welded together by passion into one voice, infinitely varied, like a part song, it excited or



eased the tension of the scene which it succeeded and that of the scene into which it subsided. The measure of imagination which went into the creation of "appropriately conventionalised rhythm" at once dramatic and choregraphic, can only be appreciated by the exaltation for the spectator of such moments as the interlude beginning, "O sons of Erechtheus," in which immediately following Medea's dispatch of her instruments of vengeance and her disappearance into the noisome dark of her palace, the chorus, under a prismatic play of light like a spun rainbow, takes hands about its leader, and leaping, gliding, undulating under the breath of the warm summer fields, the smiling laps of grain, the serenity of flowing streams, the peace of the wide easy world, on which in its anguish it dreams, it gives voice to that incomparable song, so harrowingly wistful, of an inspiration so mellow, of a cunning so cruel, that indeed it kills with kindness. Here the imagination of the producer was equal to that of the poet—of the two poets, who created the word and the hour in their several tongues. Every one will make his own choice of such moments in this production; but at least one other will occur to all, that which follows the murder of the children. The spasm of panic and pain which scatters the chorus over the darkened stage, under a bloody peal of light, and reins them against the tragic portal on which they beat with futile soft hands of women, only to draw away again into that lamentable line of twelve white hands swaying sheave-like, passively groping, returning gradually to their impersonal function, in a slow movement like a tolling of doom and despair, all to the hushed faint utterance of the strophe—surely this was such a triumph of stage-craft as none who saw it will readily forget. Here indeed drama was a "rhythmic fusion of movement, light and sound."

Though the dramatic handling of the chorus was perhaps the most significant feature of his interpretation of Greek tragedy, an interpretation the whole tendency of which has been anti-archæological and passionately theatric, the most mooted point of discussion aroused by the *Medea* was

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that of its lighting—"mood-lighting." Now mood-lighting is properly no innovation at all; all lighting that illuminates the audience and not merely the actors may be called mood-lighting. But such lighting, in achieving mood, has always been representative in character; used here orchestrally, abstractly, non-realistically, it was something of a novelty. It suggests an avenue along which the progress of theatric art may continue to evolve—in the direction, as its champions would observe, of an independent and integral technic. The impossibility of ever attaining with artificial light the illusion of nature has suggested to some of them the alternative of using light frankly for its own sake, for its emotional stimulation. "The switchboard," Maurice Browne has written, "is in reality as sensitive and responsive an instrument, though it needs a master to play it. . . . The artist-electrician of the future will sit where the leader of the orchestra sits to-day, commanding the stage, and, with *his* orchestra around him, he will direct on to that stage rhythmic harmonies of fluid light, balancing them appositely with the pantomime performed before his eyes." Others beside Maurice Browne have been concerned with this principle. Irving Pichel has had in mind the uses of pure light. So has Robert Edmond Jones. The second act of *The Jest* was a brilliant example of mood-lighting within the limitations of representation; the first act with its brazier-like luminances of violet, red and amber shadow, was an exaggeration of natural effect that approached the arbitrary and the conventional. In *Richard III* and in *Macbeth* Robert Edmond Jones took the next step and used light abstractly, theatrically. Now Greek tragedy, located but conventionally in time and space, lends itself peculiarly to such treatment. To the theory no objection can be made; it can only be proved by the felicity of the illustration. In the *Medea*, its producer now feels with some of his critics that the dangers which beset the experiment, those of self-consciousness and over-ingenuity, were not always avoided. But it was at the time the most complete experiment of its kind, and an integral element of the rhythmic drama.

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But the pictorial and plastic elements of production were not his only concern. The acting of poetic drama, the proper reading of verse on the stage, are, as he realized, the prime essential. And, a poet himself, he knew that poetry must be spoken; spoken (as good dramatic poetry is written) as simply as prose, without loss, however, of its rhythm. It must be spoken, not declaimed. When it is spoken *and acted*, the rhythm takes care of itself. Its musical quality must underlie, not overlay, it. It must be structural, not ornamental. But in avoiding the dangers of rhetoric, a pitfall into which incompetent interpreters have so often betrayed poetic drama, there is always the other danger, into which likewise another type of insensitive actor has dropped it, of a formless banality. The margin is a narrow one. Ellen Van Volkenburg in the title role set an admirable example of the right method: from the passionate conviction of her acting, from its surges of pain, its outcries of resentment, its exultations of malignity, its tender trepidations, the formal shape of the poetry fell naturally and insensibly into place and echoed in the ear long after the fall of the curtain.

And after these nine years in the theatre, it is with acting that Maurice Browne is now most concerned. It was the least successful fruit of his period in Chicago, he feels, and like Copeau he takes it as the foundation—as it is—of all the rest. Copeau began with it and has not yet been able to devote himself to the scenic elements, admittedly to his regret. By a reverse approach Maurice Browne has come to the same conclusion, and to abide by it patiently will perhaps have to risk misunderstanding hereafter. Setting, for which he labored hard in the days when it was at its darkest and most drab, will now, he says, take care of itself,—will, if anything, take care of itself only too well. But in his understanding of good acting he cleaves to a principle that is arduous.

Character is for him its foundation. And by character he means both what the word implies in a moral sense and what it imports in an artistic—sincerity and reliability. The

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viciousness of our methods on the commercial stage lies in their stereotyped formulas of acting and their facile satisfaction in "putting it over." Of that, all in admitting the notable exceptions, he is increasingly convinced; and in that is not alone. Our theatre is a packer's town. It is the same boisterous and superficial efficiency which makes us so slick and apt and insignificant in other arts. It is in reality a trade device. And at that a poor one, the formulas being so crude. Insisting then on sincerity, individuality, reliability, Maurice Browne is content to bide his time for their fruits. And more than that. As between the actor of greater talent and less consciousness and the actor of lesser ability and utter conviction, he will choose the latter. The small, still voice, the quiet steady flame, will eventually reach and warm his audience—his whole end and aim—more satisfyingly than the antic ape. Indeed it must be so, if he is to produce the plays he wishes to, in the manner they require. The consequences of this faith are laborious and imply a long and patient progress in the finding and education of his material. But it is progress from a foundation, and its results may well be lasting. As a director who does not impose himself upon his actors but setting them the goal fires and incites them to it with an inspired leadership that comes of his giving his all to them, he obtains their best and with that shapes, even in compromise with their ability, his vision.

If he spends himself so utterly, it is because of the religious—let who will call it fanatical—conviction of his work. In the essay previously referred to he has embodied his credo, faithfully and eloquently; but the limitations of space preclude quotation from a long and nobly written passage that deserves reading as a whole. Its leading thought may be hinted at, however, in the following lines:

"Life is actuated by the will to consciousness.

"Consciousness is illuminated by art.

"Art, in common with all religions, needs its ritual and priesthood."

Somewhat bald in this form, these theorems are devel-

oped richly in a statement of faith that begins by describing the limitations of naturalism.

"Just as physical movement is the first sensuous constituent of drama, so worship, the movement of the soul, is its spiritual essence . . . No intelligent audience to-day will accept a play whose basis is not firmly grounded in reality, and no intelligent audience to-morrow will accept a play where reality is not magnificently transfigured into rhythm. The poet, therefore, who aims at recreating drama not only must express himself in beautiful forms but must also think clearly and hard. Since his object is to move profoundly—to illuminate—the highest spirits of his own and all succeeding times, his art will, directly or indirectly, express his own highest spiritual conviction, which will inevitably be the highest spiritual conviction of his age. That conviction to-day is written across the world: we believe the cornerstone of loveliness is reality . . . The tragic view of life consists in the fearless facing of reality; tragic art consists in its transfiguration. The art which denies reality, or denies the realities of birth, existence and death, is a blasphemous art, abominable to all who worship life; the art which minimises reality, or minimises the realities of pain, oppression and disease, is a lying art, terrifying to all who love truthfulness; but the art which faces reality, and all that reality implies, and is glad—that art voices to-day the highest spiritual conviction of humankind, as it has always voiced it and always will. Two and a half thousand years ago Euripides said:

'Whoe'r can know, As the long days go,

That To Live is happy, hath found his Heaven.'

Human wisdom has reached no higher point; perhaps there is none for it to reach. Tragedy, as Aristotle knew, is the happiest of the arts; for the joyful facing of reality involves its transfiguration. To worship life and to love truthfulness is to know God."

Does this throw a light on that high-hearted and humorous-minded young man—problematically young?—who may found an American art-theatre?

# THE AUTOCRAT OF THE COFFEE STALL

BY HAROLD CHAPIN

*Characters:*

KEEPER OF THE COFFEE-STALL.

BERT.

SAM.

SMALL MAN.

ALF.

THE AUTOCRAT.

SEDLY.

SCENE: *The corner of a wide thoroughfare near Victoria Station. Midnight in November. A large, well equipped coffee-stall stands just L. of C. facing audience, with a slight turn to the Right. A foot from its L. end is a lamp-post which illuminates a vivid patch of light from off L. to half way R. to C. The warm amber light from the coffee-stall lamps blends with it just in front. There is no other lighting of any sort, the R. wings and back cloth being out of the patch of light are consequently lost in darkness. There is the massive corner of a building L. with an exit below it.*

*The idea is that a pavement runs from up R. to down L., the coffee-stall being in the road at the kerbside, and the lamp-post on the kerb.*

*There are three men at the counter of the stall. Two—of the street fruit seller, or Covent Garden Porter type—are at the R. end, and another—a bowler-hatted and shabby-coated little man with a wan face and a large nose—is cracking the shell off a hard boiled egg at the other.*

*The Coffee-stall keeper is drawing a cup of coffee from the well-polished urn at the R. end of counter as the curtain rises. He is a stout, well-to-do man of his class, with clean white shirt-sleeves rolled above his elbows and a capacious red waistcoat decorated with a large watch and chain. His hair is dark and short and well oiled down, and his cheeks and forehead are large and also highly polished. He places the coffee before one of the two men at R. end of stall.*

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KEEPER. There y'are, Bert. Now you're satisfied.

[*The man addressed takes the cup. He is a surly-looking man with a chewed mustache and an air of general dissatisfaction.*]

BERT [*with sarcasm*]. Am I?

KEEPER. Wot do you mean by "Am I?" You blooming well ought to be.

BERT [*in the same tone*]. Ought I?

KEEPER. Yus, you ought. You've got wot you arsked for.

BERT. 'Ave I?

KEEPER [*incensed*]. Yus, you 'ave.

BERT. No, I 'aven't. I arst you for *two sardines*.

KEEPER [*with great firmness*]. I'm not goin' to open another box of sardines to-night, my lad, so don't you think it.

[*Bert grumbles to his companion over his coffee. The small man hails the Keeper in a high tone of scientific inquiry.*]

SMALL MAN. Guv'ner, what *is* this you've gimme?

KEEPER [*warningly, without moving*]. That? That's an egg. What did you think it was?

SMALL MAN. Oh, I thought it was an egg too—w'en I see it in the distance. But it ses otherwise!

KEEPER [*nettled*]. What d'you mean?

SMALL MAN [*with sweet seriousness*]. It's been singing me a little 'ymn wot I 'avent 'eard since I was a nipper.

KEEPER. None o' your larks. Give it 'ere. [*Moves to L. of stall.*]

SMALL MAN [*addressing egg*]. Go to poppa. [*Looking up.*] It ses you're a nasty, cruel man, and it doesnt want to leave me.

KEEPER. If you've any complaint t'ō make, 'and it over.

SMALL MAN. Its the egg wots doin' the complainin'.

[*The humorist obeys.*]

KEEPER [*after sniffing at the egg in the professional manner; with the utmost conviction*]. That's a perfectly good egg.

## THE AUTOCRAT OF THE COFFEE-STALL

SMALL MAN [*very seriously*]. You surprise me.

KEEPER. Look 'ere——

SMALL MAN. Just shows yer 'ow 'ard it is to judge, doesnt it?

[*The Keeper takes another egg from the shelf and puts it down on the counter with considerable dignity.*]

KEEPER. There. [*Putting offending egg aside.*] I'll eat it myself w'en I gets 'ungry.

SMALL MAN. You'll 'ave to be *very* 'ungry.

[*The Keeper dashes ponderously through the stall door—which is at the L. end—in pursuit of the humorist, who dodges away to a safe distance.*]

SMALL MAN [*dancing about*]. Daddy can't catch me. [*He knocks into Bert.*]

BERT [*angrily*]. 'Ere. Dont come bargain' into me.

SMALL MAN. Sorry.

[*The Keeper gives up the chase and reenters his stall in response to a rapping on the counter by Bert. The Small Man returns to his end of the counter.*]

BERT. Chuck playin' wi' the kid, and gi's a bit o' seed cake.

[*The Keeper complies. A man enters up R. and paces slowly along pavement towards stall. He is a tall, thin man in a long, dirty tweed great-coat, with an exceedingly dirty white muffler around his neck. He wears a tweed travelling cap with the ear-flaps tied up on top, and a peak behind as well as in front. His hands are deep in his pockets, from one of which a whangee cane—very bent and ragged at the end—sticks up. He looks about fifty-five to sixty years of age, and wears a ragged military mustache of rather generous dimensions which is a mixture of sandy and grey. His clothes, though very shabby and dirty, are well made, and his boots are good. He walks slowly and very erect, with the leisured air*



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*of an officer going the rounds. The customers at the coffee-stall are apprised of his approach by the Small Man.]*

SMALL MAN. 'Ere 'e is.

*[Bert and his friend turn and all three involuntarily draw themselves up and lower their voices. The newcomer stops about a yard from the stall with his back to the audience and nods to them. His manner is intensely autocratic.]*

KEEPER *[with the polite familiarity of a good waiter]*. Breakfast, sir?

*[The Autocrat moves to the centre of the counter and rests his left arm against it, facing L. with his back three-quarters to the audience.]*

AUTOCRAT. Thenk ye. *[He speaks in a gruff, measured voice, with a certain huskiness and rattle which occasionally develop into a fit of coughing. His nationality is unmistakably Scottish.]*

BERT *[whispering to his friend]*. Always calls it 'is breakfast. Dont believe 'e gets up till nigh on midnight.

*[Bert's friend—Sam by name—gazes at the Autocrat's back with great interest.]*

SAM. Gow on! !

BERT. Fact.

*[The Autocrat stands quietly waiting for his coffee, unconscious of their existence. The Small Man plucks up courage to address him.]*

SMALL MAN *[with great courtesy]*. Can I offer you a cigarette?

AUTOCRAT *[taking a woodbine from the packet held out to him]*. Thenk ye. *[His coffee is placed before him.]* I'll trouble ye for a match.

KEEPER *[supplying match smartly]*. Anything to eat, sir?

AUTOCRAT *[after lighting cigarette slowly]*. Aye. I'll take a sardine an' some bread an' butter.

KEEPER *[rapidly producing tin and tin opener and falling to briskly]*. Right, sir.

## THE AUTOCRAT OF THE COFFEE-STALL

BERT [*annoyed*]. 'Ullo! I thought you wouldn't open another box to-night.

KEEPER [*quietly*]. I've changed me mind.

BERT. I notice you wouldn't do it to oblige *me*——

KEEPER [*bending back lid of tin*]. I'm obligin' meself. You can 'ave some now if you like.

BERT. Can I? After me seed cake? [*With sarcasm.*] Thanks.

[*The Keeper serves the Autocrat's sardine and bread and butter.*]

AUTOCRAT. What's the matter?

KEEPER. Nothin', sir. I sed something about not opening another box to-night—just by way of a joke.

AUTOCRAT [*seriously*]. A joke?

KEEPER. Yes.

AUTOCRAT [*grimly*]. Well, mebbe I'm defeecient in humor. [*Dissecting his sardine methodically.*] I'm obliged to ye for opening the tin for me— especially as I'm no' going to pay ye the nicht.

KEEPER. Oh, that's all right, sir.

[*The Autocrat continues eating and smoking alternately.*]

BERT [*to his friend*]. 'Ear that, Sam?

SAM. Wot?

[*Bert indicates the Autocrat with a gesture of his head and whispers into Sam's ear.*]

SAM. Gow on!

KEEPER. I'm glad to see you eatin' again, Sir.

AUTOCRAT. Aye. My appetite's no' been very guid lately.

KEEPER. Your cough don't seem to get any worse.

AUTOCRAT. I'm doubtful if it could. [*Chuckles grimly.*]

KEEPER. We *must* 'ope for a short winter.

SMALL MAN [*entering conversation*]. We can't grumble at to-night, sir.

AUTOCRAT. I'm no' likely to grumble.

SMALL MAN. You gets it pretty cold in Scotland, I suppose, sir?

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AUTOCRAT. In Scotland? Oh, Aye. [*With a twinkle*]. What makes ye mention Scotland, noo?

SMALL MAN [*very nervously*]. I—thought per'aps,—you might 'a' been there, sir.

AUTOCRAT [*chuckling*]. You cou'd na' by any chance 'a' guessed that I was Scottish?

SMALL MAN [*slightly reassured*]. Well, I thought it just possible you might be, sir.

AUTOCRAT. Juist possible? Aye, it's juist possible I am. Ye'd not take me for anything else but Scottish, noo, would ye?

SMALL MAN. Not easily, sir.

AUTOCRAT. Thenk ye. [*Shakes him seriously by the hand.*]

KEEPER. Been Norf lately, sir?

AUTOCRAT [*quietly*]. No' for twenty years—except for ten days before the war.

SMALL MAN. The last war, sir?

AUTOCRAT [*catching up the phrase bitterly*]. The last war? Aye, the last war I'll ever see.

BERT [*chiming in*]. Ah! That's what they all say.

AUTOCRAT [*turning sharply*]. That's what who all say, may I ask, sir?

BERT. Pretty well all the chaps what was in it. I know a few.

SAM. So do I. My brother-in-law, wot works at the Standard—'e ses as old England can get along wivout 'im next time.

AUTOCRAT. Then he's a coward, Sir. We may grumble, but if the word came—we'd go out again to-morrow.

SAM. Oh, rats!

AUTOCRAT [*dangerously*]. What did you say to me, sir?

SAM. I said rats.

AUTOCRAT [*rating him soundly and effectively*]. You're an ill-bred young pup, sir! A dirty young pup, sir! Wash your neck, sir! Put your feet down flat on the ground, sir! Shave that mess off your lip, sir, and try to grow a mustache,

## THE AUTOCRAT OF THE COFFEE-STALL

and don't presume to address me again until you have learnt to be civil.

SAM [*crushed and amazed*]. Gawd's truth!

AUTOCRAT [*turning his back squarely upon him and resuming his conversation with the startled Small Man*]. What were we talking about?

[*The Small Man stammers for a moment over the reply.*]

SAM [*aside to Bert*]. Did you ever 'ear anything like 'im?

BERT. Shut up and——

SMALL MAN [*still quailing under the Autocrat's angry gaze*]. Scotland, I think, sir.

AUTOCRAT. Oh, Aye.

KEEPER [*trying to regain calm*]. It's a fine country, sir. Glasgow's a fine city. I've got some picture pos' cards of it. It's a rising city.

AUTOCRAT [*coldly*]. Aye. So I've heard—commercially.

KEEPER. You dont 'appen to 'ave been there?

AUTOCRAT. No.

SMALL MAN. It's a great *Liberal* country, aint it, sir?

AUTOCRAT. The world's all Liberal these days. Too Liberal—to its enemies.

BERT [*aggressively*]. Oh? Oo told you so?

AUTOCRAT [*turning again*]. I beg your pardon?

BERT. Oo told you as we was too liberal to our enemies?

KEEPER. I don't want no politics 'ere, so——

BERT. Well, 'e began it.

AUTOCRAT. I didna think my remark was addressed to you, but I'll tell ye. The War told me.

BERT [*under his breath*]. Good old War!

KEEPER [*hastening to cover Bert's remark*]. You'll mean the Boer War, sir?

AUTOCRAT. Aye. Ye've mebbe heard me say that I was through it.

KEEPER [*as before*]. You may 'ave 'appened to mention it, sir.

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AUTOCRAT. Well, gentlemen. The Boer War. What was it?

BERT. A bloomin' expense.

SMALL MAN. 'Ear, 'ear!

AUTOCRAT. Ye're richt, sir. An' why? Because it was conducted on Liberal principles.

SAM. There was a Conservative government——

AUTOCRAT. I'm no' talking of Gover'ments, or Parties, sir. The World's a' Liberal, these days. Whiggish, if ye know the meaning of the worrd. Saft, an' orderly, an' civil.

SMALL MAN. I don't see much 'arm in bein' civil.

AUTOCRAT [*scornfully*]. Perhaps ye love the Police for the same reason.

SMALL MAN. What 'ave the Police got to do with civility?

AUTOCRAT. They are the civil authorities, are they not? They keep men saft an' orderly.

SMALL MAN [*meekly*]. I'm afraid I don't quite follow you.

AUTOCRAT. I say the Police are the civil authority, aren't they?

SMALL MAN. Not to me.

AUTOCRAT. Ye're mixing up civility an' courtesy, my friend. They're no' the same thing. You can take it from me the police constitute the civil authority.

SMALL MAN [*unconvinced*]. All right.

AUTOCRAT. And what is Liberalism based on?

SMALL MAN [*completely nonplussed*]. Gawd knows.

AUTOCRAT. I'll tell ye, sir. It's based on Civil Authority. Which means that any little whipper-snapper can call himself my equal an' run to a Policeman when I set oot to prove to him he's no'. Liberalism is Policemanism. What did I ask ye first? I asked ye: What was the Boer War. I'll tell ye the answer. It was a Policeman's war. We weren't sent oot as fighters to show the Boers who was right, but as Policemen to round them up and keep them in order and see that they behaved themselves,—an' as soon as they'd promised—bound themselves over—to do

## THE AUTOCRAT OF THE COFFEE-STALL

so we came away home again an' asked for our pay. We were Policemen. Aye, and we had other Policemen over us to see that we —— [*His excited speech terminates in a burst of uncontrollable coughing during which the others keep an uncomfortable silence*].

SMALL MAN. After all—you know—War is only telling the other chap to toe the line, and if he doesn't, bloom-in' well making him.

AUTOCRAT. You're wrong, sir! War is Nature's plan for making Men and Nations great by giving life to the strong, and death to the weak.

BERT [*shocked*]. 'Struth.

AUTOCRAT. Yes, sir. But there'll be no more war. Ye can't get War from paid troops. Policemen, that's all they are. Our ancestors made war, sir. They fought for spoils. The spoils to the strong. That's part o' the plan. Every man in an invading force should provide for himself from the country. If he provides well, so much the better for himself, and so much the worse for the country. That would be war, sir. Prosecuted with all the vigor of man.

BERT. You'd be prosecuted if you tried it.

AUTOCRAT. What did you say, sir?

KEEPER [*gently*]. Quarter past twelve, sir.

AUTOCRAT [*stopping abruptly and turning*]. Eh?

KEEPER. Quarter past twelve.

AUTOCRAT. Thenk ye. [*Drains coffee-cup.*] Disgraceful, closing pubs in a free country. [*Strides off hastily down L.*]

[*There is a moment's pause after he has left. Then the Small Man, catching the Keeper's eye, voices the general sentiment.*]

SMALL MAN. 'E's a rum 'un, aint 'e?

KEEPER. 'E's alright. Bit nutty, that's all.

BERT [*angrily*]. Bit nutty? 'E's bloomin' well up the pole in a sailor suit, an' can't get down for splinters.

SAM. 'Oo is 'e?

BERT. Wot? 'Aven't you never met 'im before?

SAM. Not that I knows of.

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BERT [*ironically*]. O, 'e's quite one o' the sights. W're d's'e live, George?

KEEPER. Down Milbank—w'ere they're pullin' the old 'ouses down. 'E comes along 'ere every night about this time an' 'as a bite. Calls it 'is breakfast.

SMALL MAN. Doesn't seem to ever 'ave anything else, much, does 'e?

KEEPER. 'E goes an' 'as a drop at the Crown before they close.

BERT. Wot I wants to know is:—'ow can 'e go gargling at the Crown w'en 'e can't afford to pay you for 'is caw-fee?

KEEPER. 'E must put aside something for it. Poor old chap, it don't take much to make 'im tuppence-on-the-can. I think 'is 'ead's a bit weak.

SMALL MAN. Must be a great savin', 'avin' a weak 'ead.

SAM. Old soldier, aint 'e?

BERT. In 'is mind.

SAM. Aint 'e really.

BERT [*very scornfully*]. Naow.

SAM. Gow on!

KEEPER. Of course 'e is. Anyone can see it.

BERT. Don't be silly. Didn't you 'ear 'im say 'e'd go out again?

KEEPER [*tolerantly*]. 'E's a bit cracked, that's all. 'E didn't mean it.

SAM. You ought to 'ear my brother-in-law on the subject. W'y 'e lost the stoppin' out of three teef along 'o the 'ard biscuits, an' 'e's never got the plum pudden' wot we posted out to 'im yet. You ought to 'ear 'im on soldierin'. Mugs game 'e calls it.

BERT. So it is.

KEEPER [*quietly*]. Old Scotty's been in the army right enough, Bert, don't you worry.

BERT. I notice 'e don't mention wot regiment 'e belonged to.

SMALL MAN [*excitedly*]. Yes, 'e does. Only the other

## THE AUTOCRAT OF THE COFFEE-STALL

night w'en 'e was a bit blindo. Second Battalion Keelshire—you know—Scott's Buffs.

SAM [*raising his voice in surprise and ecstasy*]. Wot? Oh, nah 'e's done it! Nah we 'ave got 'im! W'y my bruver-in-law was in that very regiment—Second Battalion, too, an' 'e ses as there wasn't a Scotchman in the 'ole battalion except the Colonel.

BERT. There, I told you so.

KEEPER. Your brother-in-law couldn't 'ave known every man in the Battalion. Why, that's nigh a thousand men, isn't it?

SAM. Somethink like it. But everyone mentioned it. It was one of 'is regular jokes in 'is letters 'ome.

KEEPER [*sourly*]. Your brother-in-law's too fond o' jokes.

BERT. It'd be a lark to fetch 'im along 'ere and confront old Scotty wiv 'im. Can't you picture it—?

SAM. It'd serve 'im right.

BERT. You owe 'im one for reminding you as your neck wanted washing.

SAM. I could get 'im nah! I knows w'ere 'e goes for 'is drink after the show of a night. Wot's the time?

BERT [*turning and looking at clock in stall*]. Nigh on the 'arf 'our.

SAM. I'll catch 'im w'ile 'e's bein' turned out. [*Starts off R. but stops*]. I say—you'll keep 'im 'ere till I comes back wiv Alf.

BERT. 'E wont get away once I gets me ten commandments on 'im.

[*SAM exits down R. hastily.*]

BERT [*gleefully*]. Now we'll 'ave a bit o' fun.

KEEPER [*shaking his head regretfully at him*]. You've got a bad 'eart, Bert.

SMALL MAN. Oh, a naughty, wicked 'eart.

BERT. Are you speakin' to me?

SMALL MAN. Yes, please.

BERT. Well, don't.

KEEPER [*gathering in Bert's cup*]. Fivepence, please.

BERT. Frippence.



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KEEPER. Fivepence.

BERT. 'Ow do you make that out?

KEEPER. Two cawfees, two bread an' butters, packet o' woodbines, an' a seed cake.

SMALL MAN [*sadly*]. You know that aint the food for a growing boy.

BERT. Two cawfees? I only 'ad one.

KEEPER. Wot price your friend?

BERT. That's nothin' to do with me.

KEEPER. Come on now.

BERT. 'E'll be coming back soon.

KEEPER. Then you can get it back orf 'im w'en 'e does. Come on. [*Holds out his hand determinedly.*]

BERT. Oh, you're a shark [*hands over coppers*].

SMALL MAN [*in his child-like voice*]. Please sir, if I run 'ome will you pay for me too?

BERT. I'll pay you. 'Ullo, 'ere's ol' two yards an' 'arf o' misery. Nah we'll see.

[*The Autocrat enters down L. and paces steadily past the stall.*]

SMALL MAN [*under his breath*]. There's a sell!

BERT [*hailing the Autocrat*]. Aint you goin' to stop an' have a chat, old man?

AUTOCRAT [*stopping a couple of yards from the stall's end*]. I wasn't thinking of doing any such thing, sir.

BERT. You dont bear any malice agin me for 'avin' disagreed with you, I 'ope. I quite see that you 'ave a right to your opinions, same as I 'ave to mine.

AUTOCRAT. That's a' richt, sir.

BERT. I wanted to ask you something, but I can't reckon wot it was. Per'aps if you'd do me the faver to stop—and 'ave a cup o' coffee wi' me, I might be able to think of it.

AUTOCRAT. Thenk ye. I've had all the coffee I want this night.

BERT [*reluctantly producing flask*]. Per'aps you'd care for a drop o' whiskey 'n' water, sir.

AUTOCRAT. Eh? [*comes to R. end of stall and accepting flask takes a pull*]. Thenk ye.

## THE AUTOCRAT OF THE COFFEE-STALL

[*Bert holds out his hand for flask, but the Autocrat is tasting the whiskey on his tongue and doesn't notice.*]

BERT [*trying to call attention to his outstretched hand*]. I'm sorry it's not Scotch, sir.

AUTOCRAT. It's guid whiskey, an' guid Irish is no' to be despised [*takes another pull*].

BERT. I prefer Irish, meself.

AUTOCRAT. Every man to his taste. Here's tae ye. [*Takes a good pull and hands back flask which Bert measures with his eye*]. I'm obleeged to ye.

BERT. Don't mention it.

AUTOCRAT [*with new geniality*]. Noo, what was it ye were wanting to ask me about?

BERT. I can't some'ow reckerlect it. [*With an inspiration.*] Somethin' to do with soldierin'.

AUTOCRAT [*with a return of his forbidding manner*]. I thought ye had a puir opeenion o' the profession o' arms.

BERT. Me? Oh, no.

AUTOCRAT. If ye canna think of it I'll be sayin' guid nicht.

BERT. No, no. Don't gow orf like that. I may think of it any minute. 'Ere, 'ave another drop o' whiskey.

AUTOCRAT. Thank ye. [*Takes flask.*]

KEEPER [*aside to Small Man*]. We shall be 'avin' 'im like 'e was larst week in a minute.

SMALL MAN. 'Ope 'e doesn't fall on me, that's all.

BERT [*who has been racking his brains for a topic of conversation wherewith to detain the other*]. It was—something to do with that you were saying about the spoils of the enemy——

AUTOCRAT. The spoils of the *conquered*, eh?

BERT [*eagerly*]. Yes, that's it.

AUTOCRAT. Well, what about it? [*Takes another pull at flask. The whiskey is beginning to have visible effect upon him. He sways slightly, and his peculiar manner is exaggerated.*]

BERT. Ah, that's it! What do you think about it?

AUTOCRAT [*seriously*]. I'm afraid you're the waurse

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for drink, sir. Ye don't seem able to express yerself coherently.

BERT. I've got it! Wot's done now to prevent soldiers 'elpin' themselves as you say they should. Wot would be done to a chap as was caught——

AUTOCRAT. Caught looting, eh? Ah, I can tell ye that. Ye've come to the right man to learn that. General Court Martial, four years imprisonment, and kicked out o' the Service for taking a few ounces of gold and some damn Dutch notes from the bodies o' Britain's enemies, an' a few ounces more from their homes. But that's the way war——

BERT. 'Ere, steady, old man. I only arst out of curiosity—you needn't spit all over me.

AUTOCRAT [*in the same excited vein*]. The army's all damn policemen now. Watching each other to see no one oversteps the mark.

BERT. All right, all right. Take it easy. 'Ave a drop more o' my whiskey, if there's any left.

AUTOCRAT [*pulling himself together*]. Think ye. I'm a hot tempered man.

BERT. You are that.

[*Sam returns with another man—the brother-in-law whom he has been to fetch. Alf is choking with laughter.*]

ALF. W'ich one?

SAM [*as they approach the stall*]. The——

ALF. Right, 'ere goes. [*Approaches Autocrat softly and slaps him familiarly on the back.*] 'Ullo, old sporty. I 'ear you was with me——

[*The Autocrat turns. Alf after one look at him draws himself up to attention and salutes quietly.*]

ALF. Beg pardon, sir.

AUTOCRAT [*peering into his face*]. Sedly, isn't it?

ALF. Yessir.

AUTOCRAT. I'm glad to see ye again. Stand easy. Hoo's yer wife? [*His manner is the friendly officer to the well disciplined soldier.*]

SEDLY. Rather poorly, sir.

## THE AUTOCRAT OF THE COFFEE-STALL

AUTOCRAT. I'm sorry to hear that. [*Turning to Bert.*]  
I've still got your flask. [*Returns it.*]

SAM [*whispering*]. What's up?

SEDLY. Shut yer mouth. It's the boss.

SAM. Oo?

SEDLY. The colonel.

[*Sam indulges in a prolonged whistle. The others look on in dumb wonder.*]

AUTOCRAT [*turning back to his old soldier*]. Ye've left the army, I see, Sedly.

SEDLY. Yessir.

AUTOCRAT. Quite right. The army's no place for a man in times like these.

SEDLY [*respectfully*]. The Service League wouldn't agree with you, sir.

AUTOCRAT [*hotly*]. The Service League wants to make us all into Policemen. [*More calmly.*] What are ye doing now, Sedly?

SEDLY. Workin' at the Standard Music 'all at present, sir. Flyman.

AUTOCRAT [*cracking a joke*]. Ah, supporting the arts!

SEDLY. But that's only temporary, sir.

AUTOCRAT. Aye?

SEDLY [*with a touch of pride*]. Yessir, I'm going into the force.

AUTOCRAT [*sharply*]. The what?

SEDLY. The force, sir. Police force.

AUTOCRAT [*with intense scorn and rising anger*]. Ye're going into the Police! An old man of mine is going to be a Policeman to frighten babies and chase little boys about the park. Man Sedly, can ye no find honest work to do?

[*Sedly stands steady and waits for the storm to pass.*]

AUTOCRAT [*more in surprise than anger*]. An' you're the man who would 'a' come back for me at Maardburg! [*Suddenly and furiously.*] I'll tell ye what ye can do when ye're a full-fledged policeman, Sedly. Ye can come along to seventy-two Millbank Street and tak' *me*. Aye! There'll mebbe be some none too pleased to see me, but I'm

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doon as a wanted man. Ye understand? Ye can arrest me, sir, when ye've got your commission, or your warrant, or whatever ye call it. Mebbe, ye'll see my picture in your rogues' gallery when ye come to study it. "David McLeod, Lieutenant-Colonel. Desertion in time o' war while under arrest an' awaiting Court Martial for looting." Ye'd like to arrest me, Sedly?

SEDLY [*stolidly*]. I shouldn't at all, sir, thank you.

AUTOCRAT. Ye're no policeman yet, sir, ye'll have to learn, ye'll have to learn. An' ye can—— [*His excitement terminates in another burst of coughing.*]

KEEPER [*quietly*]. You pop off 'ome, my lad. [*To Sam.*] And take your blooming brother-in-law with you.

SAM. I never guessed it was——

KEEPER. Yes, that's all jolly fine. Now pop off.

SAM. Come on, Alf.

SEDLY. 'Arf a mo'. Excuse me, sir—— [*The Autocrat—still coughing—turns to him.*] I'm sorry you think so bad of me, sir. I don't think I deserve it.

AUTOCRAT [*feebly, through his cough*]. Ye put your hand on me like a policeman.

KEEPER [*warningly in background*]. Pop off.

SEDLY. Sorry, sir, good night. [*Salutes and exits with Sam R.*]

[*All the Autocrat's temper has evaporated and he stands feebly against the stall. The Keeper looks doubtfully at the Small Man.*]

KEEPER. I wonder if you'd mind seein' 'im 'ome?

BERT. I will.

BERT. I never thought——

SMALL MAN [*in response to a nod from the Keeper*]. Can I see you 'ome, sir?

AUTOCRAT. Eh? Thank ye. I'm feeling rather tired. [*Takes the other's arm.*] He'll know where to find me, wont he? [*Chuckles feebly.*] Dirty Policeman!

[*The Autocrat exits leaning on the arm of the Small Man. Bert remains very subdued by the counter.*]

## THE AUTOCRAT OF THE COFFEE-STALL

BERT. Straight, if I'd known— [Shakes his head and is silent.]

[Sedly returns from down R.]

KEEPER [looking up]. 'Ullo! Wot 'ave you come back for?

SEDLY [seriously]. I say, does 'e often go on like that?

KEEPER. Never 'eard 'im before.

SEDLY. 'Ope to Gawd 'e doesn't or 'e'll be copped.

KEEPER. 'E's really wanted?

SEDLY. I suppose 'e must be. 'E was under arrest I know. Serious case. I suppose 'e bolted. 'E was always a bit queer.

BERT [quietly]. Looks awfully down on 'is luck now, dont 'e?

SEDLY. Poor old Boss.

BERT [voicing his thoughts]. 'E owes George 'ere for 'is bit o' supper tonight.

SEDLY. Does 'e?

[Keeper nods.]

SEDLY [suddenly placing a shilling on the counter]. 'Ere, take it out o' that. And if 'e wants anything else let 'im 'ave it, from me.

BERT [looking at him curiously]. I believe you're blubbin'.

SEDLY. Well—I've got something to blub about, 'aven't I?

BERT [slowly]. Yes. [After a pause.] It just shows yer, don't it?

CURTAIN.

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# PRODUCING THE PUPPET PLAY

BY HETTIE LOUISE MICK

"**B**EHIND the scenes" always holds a kind of mystery for the average layman. He wants to get back and see how the thing is done. He wants to measure the paint upon the leading lady's cheek, which has glowed so naturalistically from the front. He wants to stick his hand into the stove and prove for himself that it is only electric lights and red gelatine. His interest only increases when it comes to a marionette, or puppet, production.

People who view a marionette production for the first time generally classify themselves very quickly into the two groups, "Those who do and those who do not," that is, those who imagine the whole affair to be simple child's play, and those who view the many strings and the complicated framework with awe.

Both groups, I would say, are right—and wrong; it is both easy and difficult, it is both child's play and labor. The most strenuous regular production is not the equal of a puppet production for nervousness, tensivity, and actual downright physical labor.

Try it yourself, go out into the back yard, and lean over a fence which strikes you somewhere between the solar plexus and the arm pits. Tie about ten or twelve strings to a brick, place it on the other side of the fence, and while sustaining the brick and leaning against the fence, quote long passages of Shakespeare with feeling and expression.

But, after all, that is looking through the wrong end of the telescope, for there must be some compensation. Leave your brick and the back fence and betake yourself rather to Gulliver's land, to Erewhon, or to Alice's Wonderland, and find there for yourself creatures which never were on land or sea. Act as a god for a while and make them move and dance and sing at your will.

The production of a puppet play may be full of hard

## PRODUCING THE PUPPET PLAY

work, but it is never full of tedium. It cannot, however, be put on with a casual left-hand isn't-it-nice-for-the-children kind of attitude. It requires every bit as much time and attention and preparation as a regular production—and then some more.

In one particular only is it likely not to equal a large production, and that is in the matter of expenses. The most elaborate puppet production imaginable, a veritable *Chu Chin Chow* of puppetdom, should not cost more than from two to five thousand dollars, stage, lighting equipment, and all. But most puppet productions will not cost that, or anywhere near it. A very presentable production should be made for no more than two or three hundred dollars, everything included.

The first thing after the "will to produce" comes the choice of a vehicle, for like human beings, puppets cannot simply gambol, even in their most engaging manner, across the stage with no aim but to be puppets. They have to tell a story in their own way. The choice of a play depends almost entirely upon the producer, but he generally starts out with the idea that puppets can do certain things that human beings cannot do, else why puppets? They can float, and they can fly, and they can make hazardous leaps; they can retain a grim solemnity when doing the most absurd things, from the human standpoint; they can convey stark tragedy and give the impression of elusive beauty. Sometimes the play is chosen first, then the puppets and sets adapted to it, as Ellen Van Volkenburg, formerly of the Chicago Little Theatre, did with her puppets. The opposite point of view is exemplified in the method of Tony Sarg, New York illustrator and cartoonist, who makes the play suit the puppets. If he has discovered a mechanical means whereby he can make puppets smoke, or dance, or in any other way mimic human actions amusingly, he builds his play around these "stunts."

The technical details of making a puppet are many and intricate. The predominant characteristic of a role must be caught and stamped upon the puppet. As a rule, the



simpler the lines and the fewer the complexities, the better it carries. Intricate detail never gets past the foot-lights, and finely modelled features do not make the impression of distinction that those do that have been merely roughly outlined in a few bold strokes.

One or two characteristic gestures are sufficient. And indeed, even when human beings are considered, how many of them go through their lives expressing all their emotions with only one or two gestures!

Contrary to the popular opinion, which seems to be that an individual and separate string is required for each movement of a puppet, a few strings, sometimes even only one, are all that are necessary, and indeed all that are possible. His Majesty the Puppet does not need a string to make him sit down, another to make him arise, one to nod his head and another to shake it, one set of strings to walk with and another set to sit still with, a string for every separate and individual movement. Like a human being, he needs a few guiding impulses, and these control all his actions. In the figure most used today he has to have two strings on his shoulders for support, two on his head to turn it, or nod it, or shake it. He must have a string on each hand to draw it up; gravity takes care of the downward movement; the feet are the same. To aid in nodding his head, he must have a string at the back of the neck, and, to steady him, and ease him into a chair, and draw him out of it, he needs a string attached to the middle of his back. This makes ten strings, the average used by such people as Mr. Sarg and Miss Van Volkenburg. When others are needed it is for special things, such as the moving of eyes and mouth, or some special gesture of the hands or feet, but even then only one or two extra are desirable or possible.

The puppets made, much of the problem of character is solved in their appearance, but the puppeteers still have a large part to play, and need to have certain characteristics themselves. While skill of fingers is desirable in a puppeteer, it is not nearly so essential as the ability to act. It is far better to get as a puppeteer one who has never seen

## PRODUCING THE PUPPET PLAY.

a puppet, but who has imagination and a sense of character, than to get an able manipulator who knows nothing of character projection. It is also essential that the puppeteer have a serious spirit of play, or a spirit of serious play, if you will. Self-consciousness is fatal, and an external attitude of "aren't they dear little things" will spoil a puppet as quickly as petting and flattering attention will spoil a child. It gets stiff and wooden when its puppeteer is conscious of the fact that it is made of wood and cloth. The puppets have to live from the inside out, and the puppeteer has to be enough of a child to lose his identity completely in the consciousness of the "livingness" of the puppet.

After the parts are assigned, the actor, afterwards to become also a puppeteer, proceeds as with an ordinary production, by getting his characterization. The vocal projection is the most important, it being necessary for some kind of a vocal sound to accompany nearly every gesture.

This fact, of course, is kept in mind, as the actors take their relative positions and proceed to carry on the scene, and develop business, as in an ordinary production. Vocal distinctiveness, also, is absolutely essential, hence one character speaks with a nasal quality, another uses a lisp, another bellows, and another uses a sharp high tone, or a sweet liquid high tone, according to the tonal quality of the actor's voice. The point is to secure variety and distinction of vocal character so that the audience will know without doubt at any given moment which character is speaking.

When the "business" is blocked out, the characterizations firmly fixed, and the lines completely learned, it is time to turn to the actual manipulation of the puppets. But this part of the work must have been thoroughly done, for once the puppet is in the hand there is no time for faltering.

The point here, as in golf, baseball, or any other indoor or outdoor sport, is to keep the eye on the goal, not on the implement, that is, to keep the eye on the puppet not on the frame, or controller, the wooden arrangement held in the hand by which the puppet is directed.

There is very little actual technique to be learned. Mr.

Sarg initiates his puppeteers by teaching them what he calls the "marionette swing," not as an end in itself, but merely to familiarize the puppeteer with the controller and the figure on the end of the strings. This marionette swing is an exaggerated swinging of the feet backward and forward, a motion which ultimately develops into a walk. Walking is the most difficult thing to make a puppet do, because it must seem to be propelled by its own volition, and not simply dragged across the stage on strings. Excellent walking, however, depends more upon the balance of the puppet when it is made than upon the technique of the puppeteer.

It is not long before the puppets become live things to their puppeteers, and the concern for their welfare supersedes every other passion for the moment. In great glee, Mr. Sarg tells a story: One day while he was standing upon the back bridge of his stage, something gave way and he fell to the floor accompanied by ten or a dozen puppets. Miss Lilian Owen, his assistant at the time, who had just finished making the figure of Bulbo for Thackeray's *The Rose and the Ring*, hearing the crash, rushed behind the stage and seeing Mr. Sarg lying on the floor in a tangled mass of puppets and stage, exclaimed, "My God! Bulbo! I hope you haven't tangled him."

Lighting a puppet production is much like lighting a regular production, but many more restrictions are placed upon it. The scene must be visible, and some producers in the puppet field go no further than that. But a puppet production lighted in this unimaginative way is even more flat and glaring than a regular production, for the frame is smaller and the light less diffused. The same kind of lights are used as for the large production, footlights, borders, and spotlights of all sizes; particular care being taken not to throw strong light upon the strings, making them visible and destroying some of the illusion.

In the last production of *Midsummer Night's Dream*, by Miss Van Volkenburg, in New York, Mr. Maurice Browne (Miss Van Volkenburg is Mrs. Browne) took a hand, and

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endeavored to break in a few union electricians to the gentle art of handling "borders," "foots," "spots," and "baby spots" in the narrow confines of a three-by-six stage, following the action with all the complications and elaborations of Mr. Browne's lighting system.

The task was not altogether an easy one either for Mr. Browne or the electricians. The puppeteers had little to do but enjoy themselves, or place the puppets in position when they were needed.

Mr. Browne's directions in endeavoring to get an effect, would run something like this:

"The nitrogen is full at the beginning of this scene. A green slide is on the right baby spot, and the left baby spot is dimmed down. . . . Now gradually bring in the left baby. . . . When the left baby is full, blot the right baby, and throw in your foots . . . no, no, throw the left baby down stage, not against the wood; it obliterates the wood completely. . . . I think we had better stick a pin-hole in the right baby and hit Titania with it. She isn't visible from here. . . . Is the midget in the center? . . . Well, bend it down; Quince is casting shadows against the moon. . . . Now, when the mechanicals exit, and the fairies enter, dim down your foots, bring up your moon, and throw the right baby full on Puck."

It might be said that the electricians, in spite of their difficulties, became almost as fond of the little figures as the puppeteers themselves, and when they thought no one was looking, would approach them with some timidity, and shake hands with them and carry on a little pantomime conversation.

And so, while a puppet production requires much hard work, still if the performance is to be enjoyed, the puppet play must after all be *puppet play*.

# HERMANN ROSSE'S STAGE DESIGNS

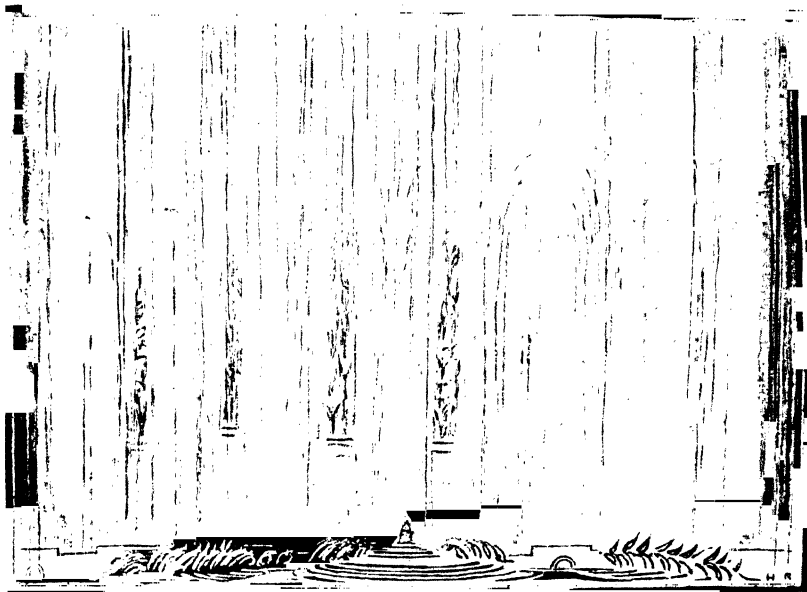
BY SHELDON CHENEY

**T**HE important thing at present is forward-sightedness.

In the American theatre we have, in stage decoration, come to a dangerous accomplishment. There are no less than a dozen artists who can be trusted to design for a romantic or realistic play a group of simple plastic settings in good taste, depending on suggestion rather than photographic exactitude or elaboration, on line and color adjustment rather than piling-up of upholsterers' materials; all these men, moreover, are competent to dress out a thin play in settings and costumes sensational enough to save the day; and six or eight of them can realize in an important drama its peculiar mood or spirit, and carry this subconsciously into the backgrounds for the action, thus doing their part toward synthetic production. Of course these artists are only occasionally called into the theatre, but we have them with us—for exhibition purposes and for an increasing though small proportion of "commercial" as well as "artistic" productions. And we critics have become a bit chesty over them.

Hermann Rosse has undoubtedly earned a place in this group of facile and intelligent decorators. But it is no longer important—though five years ago it seemed a miracle—that a stage designer should accomplish these things. Nor would it be particularly important, though rare enough, that one of the American group has taken the trouble to investigate and understand what currents are flowing from the other arts into the theatre in Europe—I mean by way of Post-Impressionism, Expressionism, even Dadaism. The really important thing for us today is beyond that. It is creativeness: forward-sightedness in practice.

Creative thinking, creative experiment, creative building

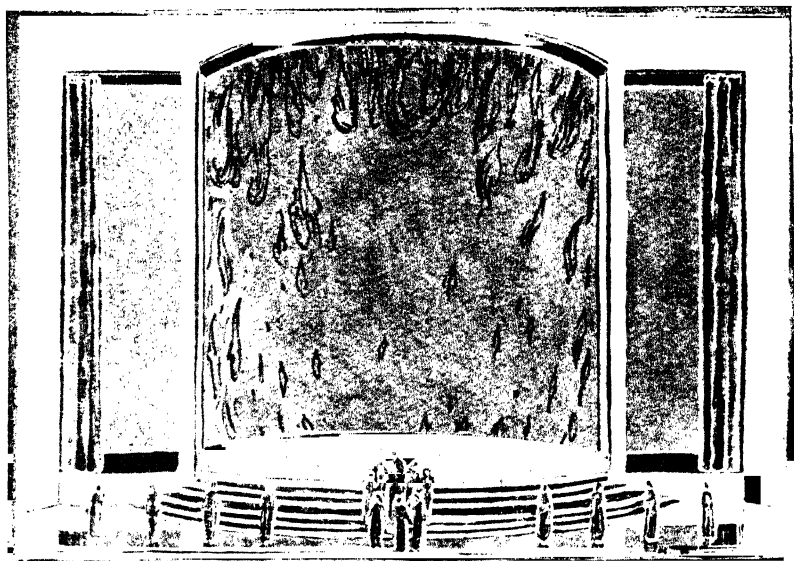


**Designs for Theatres and Settings by  
Hermann Rosse.**

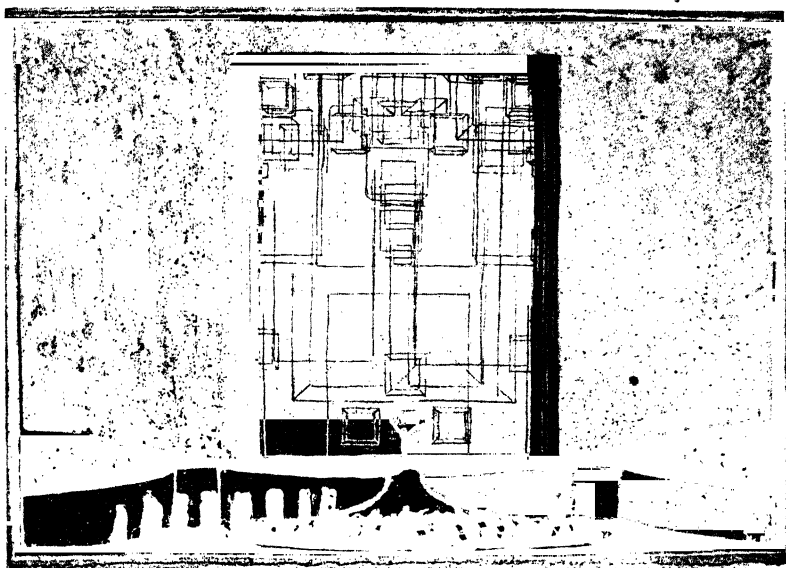
Above is shown an adaptation for a production of a nativity play projected for the huge Coliseum Building in Chicago. The audience is to sit all around the transparent scenery, which is painted and lit from the inside. The stage floor is set on different levels with flights of steps between.



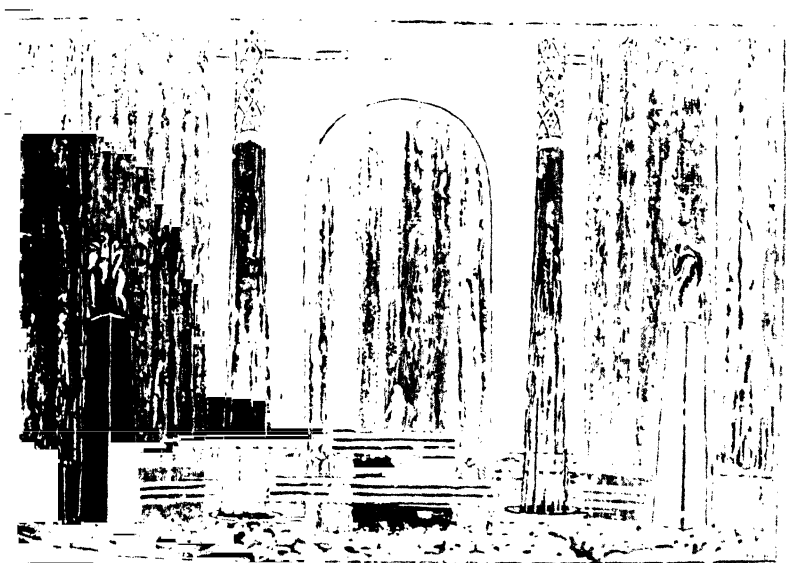
A stage for the use of projected scenery.



A stage for the use of projected scenery.

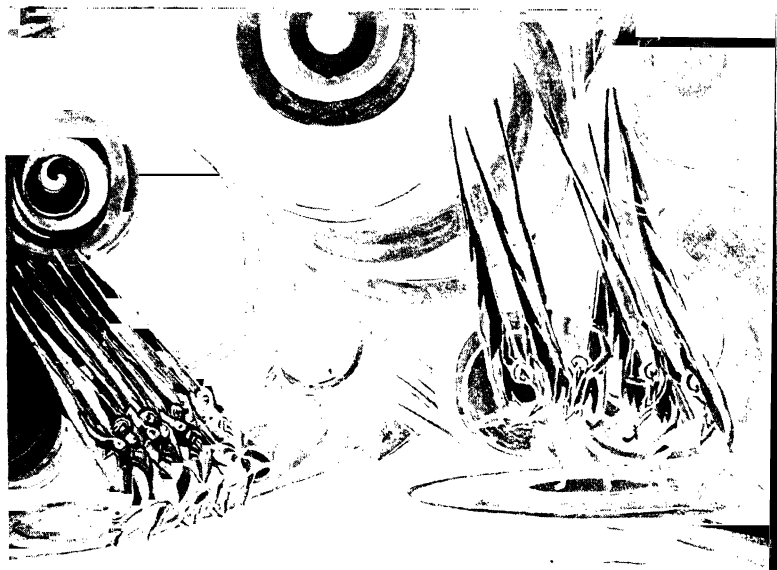


A stage for projected scenery, with three ramps as approaches to the front stage.



A temporary stage for an exhibition.

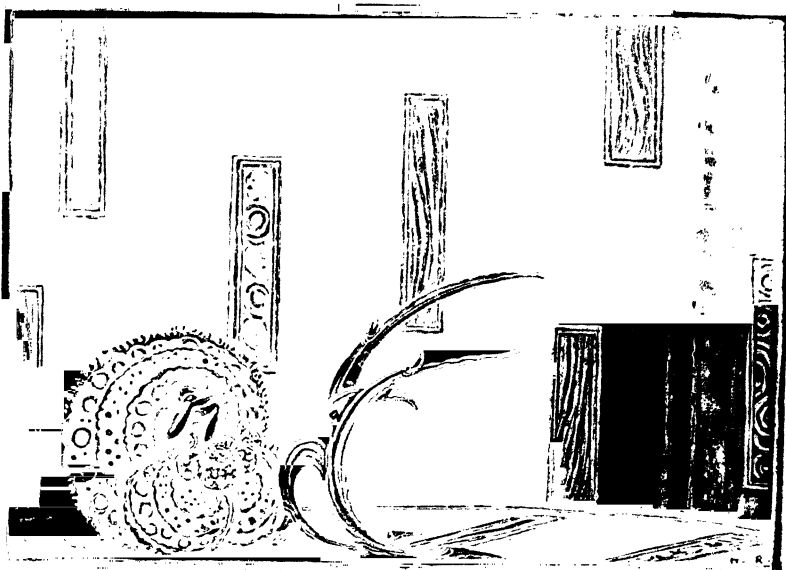




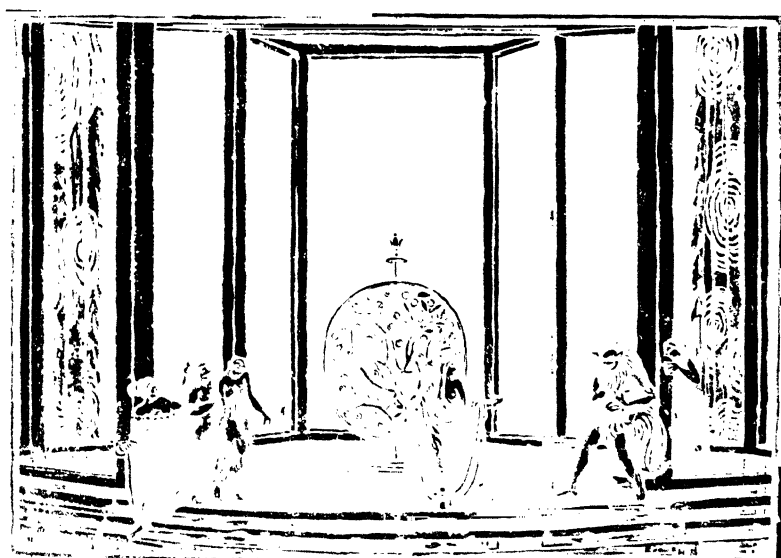
A grotesque dance scene.



Dance Macabre.



Lines and circles.



The minimum of scenery: one screen.



A tragedy produced with the aid of moving shadows.

## HERMANN ROSSE'S STAGE DESIGNS

when the practical opening offers; not merely following the European tradition or the latest European fad, but striking out ahead of Europe or away from Europe, or at the least along parallel but independent roads. Rosse is probably travelling more of these strange roads than any other artist in the American theatre. With the single exception of Robert Edmond Jones, he has, I believe, the most creative mind and talent among all those who design for the American stage today.

When I first knew his work, the qualities that attracted me were doubtless those which we now take for granted. He had come from his native Holland to decorate that nation's building at the San Francisco Exposition of 1915. His stage designs at that time were probably more eclectic and derivative than creative; but, be it noted, very widely eclectic because he had already visited the theatres, not only of most European countries, but of India, Egypt, Java, Japan and China. He was already experimenting and originating, however, and had many books and portfolios of projected scenes, stages, and auditoriums. (Always he seems to see the theatre as a whole—not merely a stage picture-frame which he is to fill.)

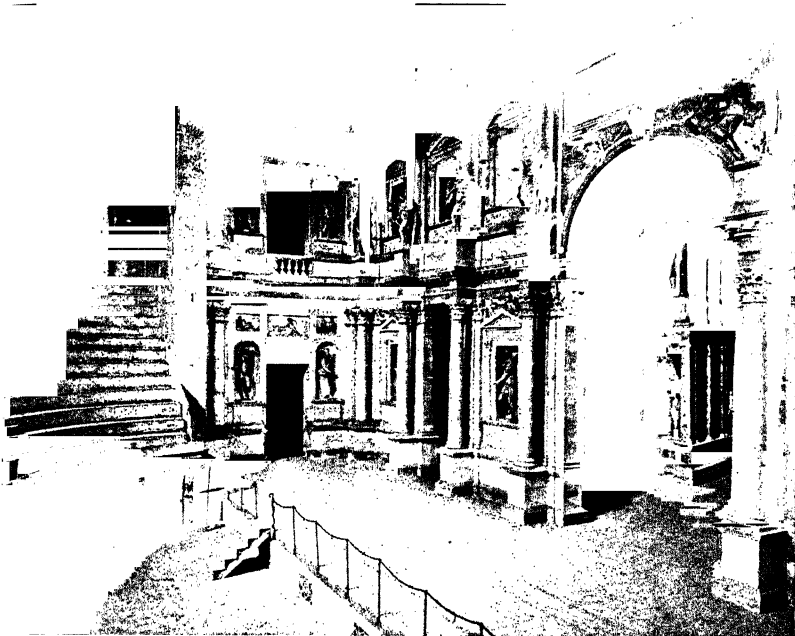
In Chicago a year or two later, while teaching decoration at the Art Institute, he designed the production of Cloyd Head's *Drama of the Nativity*,\* which has been staged two succeeding Christmases; and he gave to the Chicago Opera Company's *Madame Crysanthème*, an otherwise meritless work, an exceptionally spirited and colorful *décor*. There was one scene so lavishly decorative, with costumes of such sensationally exotic magnificence, that one wondered why *The Follies* did not adopt Mr. Rosse overnight. But it is a long way from Chicago to the New Amsterdam—and almost as far from New York's own Lexington Theatre to Broadway.

\* For review and four settings, see THEATRE ARTS MAGAZINE for April 1920. For other designs by Hermann Rosse, see issues for February 1918, January 1919, and April 1919. For his articles on Oriental theatres, see issues for Summer 1918 and January 1919.

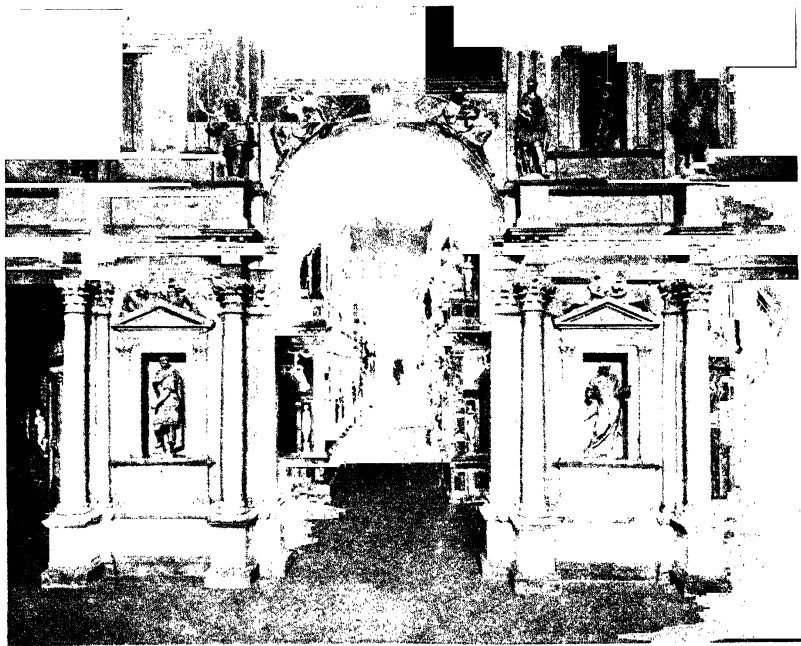
## THEATRE ARTS MAGAZINE

More recently Rosse has made brief trips back to Holland to execute an important mural commission and to design productions for a theatre in Amsterdam. But his biggest and most original projects are as yet only on paper. New York is having a chance to judge of their quality from the eighty designs in an exhibition opening at the Arden Galleries just as this is being written. It is unthinkable, however, that a man with so much to give should not be accorded the wider opportunities of frequent and important productions on a stage.

In studying the group of Rosse's designs in this issue of THEATRE ARTS MAGAZINE, the decorative value of the drawings as such should, perhaps, be discounted. I think that we have in the past swallowed a good deal that is harmful or negligible merely because the drawings were postery or atmospheric or strikingly colorful. But when one goes beyond the surface of these things of Rosse's there is a wealth of interest: new forms of stage and auditorium, new conceptions of the place of light and color and background in the scheme of the theatre, new methods of reaching the consciousness of the audience. Everywhere there is evidence that the designer is breast-up with progress in the other arts, that his mind is not only responsive but exploring, and that he has committed his allegiance to no crystallized school or movement or tendency. I like to remember, too, that he has said that art lives only by continual change, and that all he can hope for is to be at the front in his own epoch. He sees forward not only to the unaccomplished things of his generation, but to the rise of new arts out of the ashes of the best that he and his contemporaries can achieve. That is a healthful and steadying attitude.



The *Teatro Olimpico in Vicenza*. To this theatre Inigo Jones went often, remaining for long periods. The ideas for his theatrical designs were modelled completely on the architectural quality of Palladio, who designed this theatre and its curious stage.



The stage of the Teatro Olimpico. The permanent scenery is in perfect condition today. It is built of wood and plaster, the same materials used in the facade of the stage. The columns and statues and house lines down the five streets, are so diminished and flattened and colored as to give from the very first row of seats the effect of long vistas. The floor rises and the perspective runs back about thirty-five feet. A perfect example of the kind of stage that was made so famous by Inigo Jones in England under the Stuarts.

# ENGLAND IN VICENZA: THE OLYMPIAN THEATRE

BY STARK YOUNG

**I**N the early history of the British stage the only thing that excites our curiosity is the work of Inigo Jones. His reign began with that of James I and lasted through Charles, until the Puritans under the Commonwealth put an end to the sins of delight, luxuriant invention, splendor and magnificence in English art. About Inigo Jones we read and wonder. Those scenes and perspectives, and the tremendously complicated sound of all those ornaments and gods and events depicted, have always raised the problem of how it was done, how he got it all in. The most famous of these accounts is Ben Jonson's about the House of Fame in the *Masque of Queens*, "the structure and ornament of which was entirely Master Jones' invention and design." There were lower columns painted like silver, with "statues of most excellent poets on them, Homer, Virgil, Lucan and others," as if they had been massy gold. On the upper columns were the heroes that the poets had sung, Achilles, Aeneas, Caesar and their peers. Between the pillars were figured land battles, triumphs, loves, and all magnificent subjects of honor. The friezes above and below were filled with colored lights infinitely many. These scenes and devices of Master Jones' cost in present money values from a few thousand up to nearly a hundred thousand dollars. But for all these schemes there are only plans and drawings, mostly in private hands; and the Inigo Jones of the theatre and most of the theatre itself under the lavish Stuarts remains only a kind of rumor in our ears.

To walk into the Olympian Theatre in Vicenza is to see what is meant by these "scenes and perspectives." For Palladio was the ideal that Inigo Jones, both as architect and designer for the theatre, followed. Palladio's book was his constant companion; his copy of it is endlessly in-



terlined and notated. On the fly-leaf of it is written, "Vincenza, Mondaie, the 23 of September, 1613," and Palladio's initials are intertwined with the owner's in the hope of a common fame.

Il Teatro Olimpico was begun in 1579 and completed in 1584, after Palladio's death but from his designs. It was commissioned by the Olympian Academy to take the place of a temporary structure already in use. And by a more or less continuous restoration and repair this theatre stands essentially the same as it was on the night of the opening performance of *Oedipus King* in 1585.

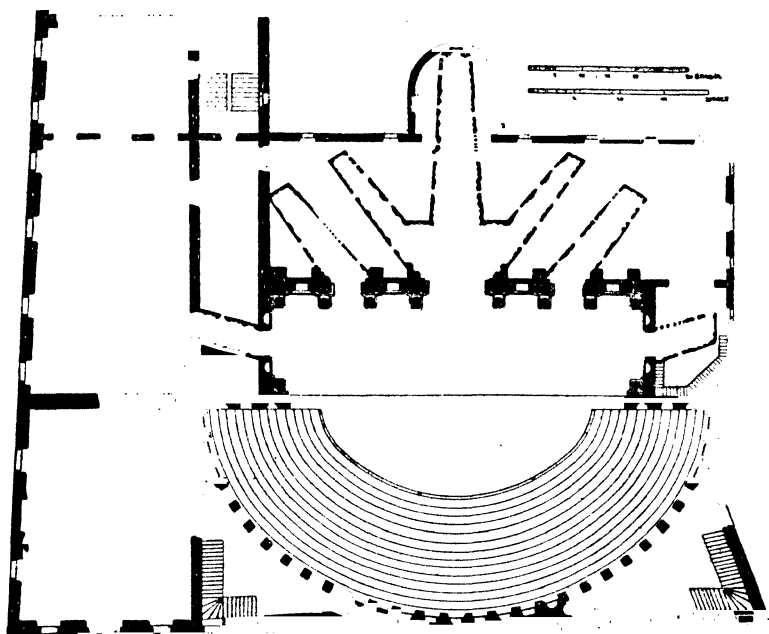
The plan of the theatre, which may be seen from the sketches, follows closely the precepts of Vitruvius, the architectural writer whose influence, reaching out from the days of Augustus, held for a time the architects of Europe in a spell. But though Palladio meant to reproduce Rome and a perspective of a Roman street, the quality of the late sixteenth century is everywhere, in the elaborate sophistication, the studious elegance, the profusion, and the breath over all of delighted and conscious affectation.

It is a roaring experience to see one of those traditional perspectives really in place. The streets opening out from the stage facade are permanently built, the floor rises steadily, the statues and columns are so contrived, diminished and flattened, that the illusion is very real. The lighting was contrived with lamps so disposed behind the walls of the scene as to give the effect of daylight. In fact Palladio kept the Roman idea in that sense for the whole theatre; and even the ceiling was to suggest the light of day; it seems first to have been a painted sky, then later a stucco and paint effect of a veil stretched overhead as in Rome, and now repainted as a sky again.

At the first performance before the curtain was dropped, the air was heavy with a sweet smell of the incense rising to the gods for Oedipus' plague-stricken city, and the sound of music and of chanting filled the house. Distinguished visitors had come from Milan and Padua and Venice and

## ENGLAND IN VICENZA

the country round. More than 3,000 ladies and gentlemen were present. The performance did not begin until half past one in the morning and ended after five. But Pigafetta, the chronicler of that night, went early with his friends and was "there in the theatre eleven hours without any fatigue at all," so great was his delight.



PLAN OF THE OLYMPIAN THEATRE, VICENZA.

# THEATRE ARTS MAGAZINE

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SHELDON CHENEY  
EDITH J. R. ISAACS

} EDITORS

{ KENNETH MACGOWAN  
MARION TUCKER

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## EDITORIAL

**S**YNTHESIS, rhythm, unity of production—these are words to conjure with among the workers in the newer theatre. They may not mean the same thing to all men, but they represent an idea that, always taken fairly for granted, has suddenly become vital and compelling, the idea that the theatre of which artists dream will never come except through a fusion of all the arts in the hands of inspired producers. We are at a new turn of the road where not the play nor the actor, not even the artist but the producer's the thing. What are the qualities that make a producer? Who knows? We have had the author-manager, the actor-manager, and lastly the artist-director; the producer is none of these, not per se. What is it that Gordon Craig lacks, and Stanislavsky has, and Copeau and Reinhardt? Surely it is not artistry nor consecration, nor devotion to the theatre, nor an understanding of the medium, nor capacity for taking pains, nor humility. What is it that, in the older theatre, has made Belasco stand out from his fellows for a generation, that marked Arthur Hopkins at his first production, that, even in the show-house, establishes the difference between men like Ziegfeld, Dillingham, John Murray Anderson, and the rest of their fellows? Can it perhaps be that capacity for handling men, for making other people see and help to interpret your vision, whatever it is, which when applied to business, we call executive ability? Perhaps. *THEATRE ARTS* hopes that the series of articles on producers, beginning in this issue, may help to clarify opinion on the subject.

Those of us who have recognized and acknowledged the immense debt due to German producers and German theatres for their pioneer work in direction, settings and lights during the ten years preceding the war, have looked eagerly for anything like definite news of how the playhouses of the Central Powers withstood the strain of the conflict and what they have been able to accomplish since the armistice. In general we have learned little more than the fact that Reinhardt, after opening his "theatre of the five thousand," the Grosses Schauspielhaus, retired in 1920 from the management of his

## EDITORIAL

three houses in Berlin, and repaired to tiny Salzburg among the mountains to begin work upon a center for great community productions somewhat on the lines made familiar here by Percy MacKaye. Word of two or three other developments in the German theatre comes through the designer Hermann Rosse, who has returned from a short visit to Berlin and other cities. Progress in production has been slight except in some very interesting and curious experiments of the "expressionist" group of artists. Plays as well as settings built along lines that we would call futurist and cubist have been given at special matinees. The most elaborate and suggestive example of such work has been in the movies, through a film called *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, which will shortly be presented in this country. The building of theatres has continued to some extent; the beautiful Volksbuehne, illustrated in the last issue of the THEATRE ARTS MAGAZINE, is perhaps the best constructed and most thoroughly equipped theatre in the world. Technically the Germans are making steady progress in stage-lighting. The General Electric Company has continued its experiments in this direction throughout war and peace. Three engineers and a number of assistants are working out the practical application of suggestions made by producers. Among the most important pieces of new equipment, after a development of the Fortuny system of lighting, are very powerful lights arranged with reflectors which permit overhead lighting without diffusing the illumination from the floor to the scenery; and a system of sliding screens, easily controlled, by which white light may be converted into any shade of the spectrum and pass from any color to any other with the greatest smoothness and ease, all under the control of a very small switchboard. Continued publication of magazines and books upon the theatre testify to the integrity and devotion of the leaders of the German playhouse under extremely difficult conditions.

Without costumes, stage set or other investiture, the Players' Fellowship recently presented at a New York theatre a "rehearsal" of Edith Ellis' *The White Villa*, dramatized from *The Dangerous Age* by Karen Michaelis. Two weeks later the play had gone into performance at a series of regular matinees. And so an idea that has been in the wind for the last ten years has finally reached expression, and everybody who is interested in the progress of the theatre wishes it good speed. The object of the Players' Fellowship is in its essence the same as that of half a dozen other organizations, much talked of but never completely realized or lost in the experimental

## THEATRE ARTS MAGAZINE

days,—the Rehearsal Club, the Try-Out Theatre, the Theatre Workshop and George Arliss' Theatre Annex. It is to bring to the attention of managers in a form adequate for appreciation "plays of unique interest, artistic merit, or social significance which might appear too speculative from a mere reading of the manuscript." It is, further, to give to players who are interested in their art an opportunity to relieve the monotony and the deadening influence of long runs by rehearsing new parts in off hours, or to try their abilities in parts of larger scope or greater variety than those for which they are usually cast. Not only for playwrights and players, but for managers and the public the experiment should be constructive.

The most noticeable development in the Little Theatre movement this season is the steady growth in the use of full-length plays, in place of the one-act programs, and the great variety of the plays chosen. Shaw, of course, is everywhere, with Barrie and Wilde following at his heels. *The Mollusc*, by Hubert Henry Davies, was tried with success both by the Little Theatre Society of Indianapolis and by the new Guild Players of Pittsburgh. The former also played to large houses, Allan Monkhouse's *Mary Broome*, produced at the Neighborhood Playhouse in New York last year. And the Guild Players have given Galsworthy's *Pigeon*, and Ibsen's *Rosmersholm* as a part of their seven months' season. In Cincinnati the Little Playhouse company, under the direction of Helen Shuster-Martin, produced *The Glory of Their Years*, by John R. Froome, which won the Mac Dowell Club Fellowship at the 47 Workshop some years ago. The Carnegie Institute Schools of Drama, by no means a newcomer in the full-length field—produced *Poe*, the latest work of Iden Payne and Thomas Wood Stevens.

Nobody knows just what it is that makes certain plays famous overnight. The appeal to our common humanity is the reason generally given, yet that hardly explains why a play of such special interest as Eugene O'Neill's *The Emperor Jones*, within five months of its original presentation by the Provincetown Players, within two months of its publication in Theatre Arts Magazine, (the only medium through which it can be known outside of New York) should already be in rehearsal by Little Theatre Organizations in Detroit, Indianapolis, San Francisco, New Orleans, etc., and should be in demand for reading from every corner of the United States, Canada, England, Scandinavia.

## THEATRE ARTS BOOKSHELF

The great Hindu drama *The Toy Cart* (known also as *The Little Clay Cart*), attributed to Sudraka in the second century A. D., is one of the great plays of the world, beautiful and vital after these many centuries. For all its literary finish, it is distinctly for the stage, and its universality reaches out through the ages and from India to America. Inferior in poetic quality and idealism to *Sakuntala*, Kalidasa's masterpiece, it is technically a better play according to Western standards, with a finely-knit, swiftly-moving plot, and clear-cut though typical characterization. Charadutta, the Brahmin, great-souled enough to love Vasatasena the courtesan for her greatness of soul, and Vasatasena, great enough to love Charadutta, are heroic figures. Mr. Symons' translation can be adequately appraised only by a Sanskrit scholar, but it seems to the layman to leave nothing to be desired. *Cesare Borgia*, a tragedy in seven scenes, sinuous, suggestive, perhaps super-subtle, is a study of Renaissance character written in exquisite verse—a literary exercise, not a stage play. (New York: Brentanos.)

**THE CITY.** By Paul Claudel. Translated from the French by John Strong Newberry. This early play by a great poet, newly translated, is but a mystic dialogue, a vague and wavering allegory, the persons of the play mere shadowy abstractions, their very speeches so lacking in individuality that they may be shifted from one person to another and nothing lost, the story but one that the reader must build for himself upon a shaking basis of surmise. What has been said of Claudel's *Hostage*, *Tidings Brought to Mary*, *Tête d'Or*, applies *a fortiori* to *The City*. But in the last is perhaps the greatest poetry of all. This free verse with its glorious throb and swing, its weight of thought and passion, its lyric splendor and rapture, is an irresistible torrent of power upon which one is borne with a sense of exhilaration and delight. Read, for instance, the antiphony to the moon chanted by the hero-poet Couevre and Lala, his mate, the eternal feminine, in the night garden. The "city" stands for civilization, which advances from capitalism, through proletarian dictatorship, to a commonwealth founded upon the teachings of Christ, in which alone, from the poet's point of view, lies the hope of the state. A captain of industry, a mighty poet, the eternal feminine, a typical democrat—these are the even less than shadowy figures that people the insubstantial scene. They speak grandly throughout this great dramatic poem. Play it is not, even by the wildest stretch of definition. Astonishing poetry it certainly is. (New Haven: Yale University Press.)

**PAWNS.** Four poetic plays. By John Drinkwater. Each of these plays is woven about a simple, fundamentally human theme: a wife's emotions as she waits in mental agony for the home-coming of her husband lost in a mountain storm (*The Storm*); the human waste involved in war ( $X=O$ ); quiet as essential to human poise (*The God of Quiet*); love, the master

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of kings and clowns and leveller of ranks (*Cophetua*). All are essentially dramatic, moving slowly through scenes of quiet preparation to sudden and inevitable close. The verse, always adequate, is often noble and beautiful, as in *X=O*, the most striking and poignant of the four plays. Written by a poet who knows the theatre, they should "act" well, but should be attempted only by actors who understand the use of blank-verse, before audiences who will understand that verse when they hear it—a severe limitation! (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Co.)

FIFTY CONTEMPORARY ONE-ACT PLAYS. Selected and edited by Frank Shay and Pierre Loving. This volume, exclusive of two plays from the Yiddish, represents fifteen countries and fifty playwrights and every type of play from burlesque (Moeller's *Helena's Husband*) to poetic tragedy (von Hofmannsthal's *Madonna Dianora*). Hence it forms practically a library of plays for any Little Theatre. The editors have indeed, as they claim, done "pioneer exploration"; have introduced to American readers such foreign playwrights as Wied and Speenhoff; have discovered fine new American plays here printed for the first time, such as Cronyn's *A Death in Fever Flat* and Day's *The Slump*. It would be ungracious, after all this long, hard, and highly intelligent labor to urge that in some cases an author is not represented by his best play. The editors know this better than anyone else. Owing to copyright law, they could not always secure the play which they wanted; they have done the best they could. The result is admirable. The collection should prove as valuable to the amateur producer as it is entertaining to the casual reader. It should be in every dramatic library, public and private, and in the hands of every Little Theatre director. (Cincinnati: Steward and Kidd Co.)

MISS ROBINSON. A play in three acts. By Elizabeth Baker. The author of *Chains* and *The Price of Thomas Scott* has in this new play fallen below her best work, though as a sheer piece of the theatre *Miss Robinson* is superior to either of her other plays. The play is not otherwise significant, though it is interesting to read and might prove effective on the stage.

THE VEIL OF HAPPINESS. Translated from the French of Georges Clemenceau. This is the tragedy of a Chinese Mandarin, who, having been content in blindness, regains sight only to comprehend the deceptions of his servants, the hypocrisy of his cherished son, the treachery of his wife and his trusted friend—and who in the end renounces the "lying light" and welcomes back that "blindness which realizes the only happy truth." It is a serious bit of playwriting, philosophically conceived, and developed rather slowly in accordance with the precepts of "fine writing"; but the dramatic structure is so logical, and the literary value so unusual, that the piece is likely to find wide production in American Little Theatres. The playing time is unusually long for a one-act drama—well over an hour. The elaborate costumes and the exotic setting will offer difficulties to the average amateur producer—and a temptation to the ambitious ones. The play would be ridiculous if not well acted, and the chief part demands almost a tour-de-force in the part of the Mandarin—he has one speech not less than six pages long. This book of the play has been beautifully printed

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by the translator, who, also acting the principal part, proved the composition a successful stage piece at its American premiere last June. (New York: Privately Printed for the Members of the Beechwood Players.)

PLAYS FOR A PEOPLE'S THEATRE. *The Fight for Freedom*, by Douglas Goldring; *Touch and Go*, by D. H. Lawrence. The phrase "people's theatre" challenges discussion—infinite and vague. Is it the theatre of an entire nation or simply of a class—the "workers"? And who are the workers? One finds no definite and conclusive answer in the prefaces to these two plays. Evidently, Mr. Lawrence had not read Mr. Goldring's preface, and flatly contradicts him at several points. Yet however the theorists may vary, the publisher knows what he is aiming at: the two plays differ in theme but they are evidently addressed not simply to a proletarian audience, nor even to workers in the broadest sense, but to all persons of a revolutionary attitude of mind. Now, if such plays are to be written to order for such a series as this, they are in danger of proving factitious, unduly sensational, and, worst of all, insincere. These plays may not have been so written, yet they are not without the marks. *Touch and Go* is a cheap, meretricious, and superficial treatment of the vast theme of Labor versus Capital so superbly handled by *The Weavers* and *Strife*. Lack of legitimate material perhaps led the author to inject into his economic *milieu* the rather unpleasing love story of Anabel Wrath, a surprisingly emancipated young woman, and Gerald Barlow, the protagonist of Capital. From a writer of Mr. Lawrence's ability it is a poor performance. *The Fight for Freedom*, though obviously artificial and written to prove a thesis, though factitious in characterization, sensational and even brutal in a way, is well conceived and well written, and is made coherent and significant by an informing idea: the difference between the sham revolutionaries, mere sentimentalists, too weak to face the new order which they cry up, and the really strong and sincere spirits who can stand light and truth and face the day unflinching. The anti-war motive, though essential to the action, is subordinate to the larger idea of a general revolution in the thought of the race. This play would almost certainly interest an audience fair-minded enough to take its point of view, and it has the added merit of making no concession to cheap sentiment and no display of ugliness for its own sake. (New York: Thomas Seltzer.)

PRACTICAL HINTS ON PLAYWRITING. By Agnes Platt. This book apparently was written for the playwright who writes with one eye on the manager and the other on the possible audience which he must please at whatever cost. It is hard to see even the "practical" value of such a book in the light of the several good manuals and of the more elaborate treatises which have appeared within the past few years. In standards, in principles, in tone, and in style, it leaves much to be desired. (New York: Dodd, Mead, and Co.)

SHORT PLAYS BY REPRESENTATIVE AUTHORS. Edited by Alice M. Smith. These twelve plays, chosen from the contemporary dramatic literature of eight various countries, are not all "representative" by any means, and several of them are even of doubtful literary value. They seem to have been selected according to no special standard except, perhaps, the copy-



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rights. However, there are none too many collections of even fairly good modern plays, and one that includes Sigurjónsson's *Hraun Farm*, Masfield's *Locked Chest*, Tagore's *Post Office*, Tchegoff's *Swan Song*, and Torrence's *Rider of Dreams*, is not an unwelcome addition to the library. (New York: The Macmillan Co.)

**NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH.** A Comedy in Three Acts. By James Montgomery. This well-known and successful farce (*not* comedy!), which pretends to no literary value, and is much better seen than read, is here presented in print. (New York: Samuel French.)

**MODERN AMERICAN PLAYS.** Collected by George P. Baker. The plays in the volume are *As a Man Thinks*, by Augustus Thomas; *The Return of Peter Grimm*, by David Belasco; *Romance*, by Edward Sheldon; *The Unchastened Woman*, by Louis K. Anspacher; and *Plots and Playwrights*, by Edward Massey. All these plays are available in other recent editions, except *The Return of Peter Grimm*, now printed for the first time. Four of the five were immense stage successes, and they make pretty good reading. While not one of them is great literature, and while the reading of them serves to bring out the difference between them and such plays as *Jane Clegg* and *Beyond the Horizon*, it is very well to have such typical recent American plays as these, technically adroit and of great vogue, brought together in one volume. (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Howe.)

**A MAN OF THE PEOPLE.** A Drama of Abraham Lincoln. By Thomas Dixon. That this play promptly failed upon its recent presentation on Broadway, was perhaps due less to any fundamental lack of "stage" quality than to the fact that Drinkwater's *Abraham Lincoln*, then holding the attention of the public, by its high literary and dramatic quality, was bound to dwarf any inferior play upon the same subject. Lincoln is here presented not as the liberator of the slave, but as the savior of the union. The characterization is one-sided and by no means great, but it is legitimate and appealing. The play is not episodic like Drinkwater's, but has a sustained plot, cumulative in intensity, with several striking situations. Though negligible as literature, it is rather good reading for its story. Granted that the subject for adequate treatment demands more expert craftsmanship and literary ability than Mr. Dixon possesses, his *Man of the People* is still a rather interesting performance. (New York: D. Appleton and Co.)

**TWO PLAYS: RODERICK'S CAREER, GAME!** By Katherine Searle. Roderick's "career" is that of a father, not that of an artist, after all, as he at last discovers after Cyrilla has abandoned him and their little daughter. Roderick is a nice boy, and he is real, too. So are the others real. The play is well put together and ought to "act" well, and, without any high literary quality, is perhaps above the average of even those which find their way into print. This might also be said of *Game!*, which is the lightest of light comedy, but not farce, about the flirtatious husband who still is in love with his wife, but who is fatally attractive to other women. (Boston: The Four Seas Co.)

**RALEIGH, THE SHEPHERD OF THE OCEAN.** A Pageant-Drama. By Frederick Henry Koch. A brave pageant, graced by the presence of most of the



Scene from *Mixed Marriage*, the play by St. John Ervine which was recently produced in New York, first at the tiny Bramhall Playhouse and later at uptown theatres, by a company organized by Augustin Duncan and Rollo Peters, with Margaret Wycherly in a leading role. Setting by Rollo Peters. (From a photograph by Francis Bruguiere.)



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Theatre Arts Magazine

New York City



Eugene O'Neill, author of *The Emperor Jones* and *Beyond the Horizon*, and one of the founders of the Provincetown Players. (Photograph by Mary Dale Clarke Studio.)

# THEATRE ARTS MAGAZINE

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## BROADWAY BOWS TO BY-WAYS

BY KENNETH MACGOWAN

A BETTER season than last—which was itself the best season the New York theatre had ever known—reached its climax in the almost perfect production and the extraordinary financial success of a very moving and very beautiful play, *Liliom*. More than that, in this play, added to *The Emperor Jones*, it gave what I cannot help thinking is a definite and trusty indication of what our future seasons are more and more to bring forth. Franz Molnar's play was written ten years ago; it was produced with no great success upon the Continent and failed lamentably to please either the British public or its critics when given to London in an adapted form during the past year. It wins the warmest response now and in America, because our audiences are free of set ideas as to the strict formulas of drama, and eager for plays that release with new, fresh vividness the thing in human beings which we are still constrained to call the soul. It begins in reality; it adds warm color and free movement; and it leaps up beyond these to a truth that seldom slips into our playhouse when we are intent on those three- and four-act distortions which we call realism, naturalism, the exact reproduction of life.

In structure *Liliom* looks forward—or backward, if you care to remember that Molière and Shakespeare never bothered their heads over the technique that is so industriously taught to young dramatic hopefuls in our colleges. It is a play of eight scenes. One of the scenes is in heaven. One brings us back to earth with a man who has known the fires of purgatory. Until *Liliom* reaches heaven, it

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might be said to apply, in the true sense, the methods of realism. Without an ounce of theatrical contrivance, it shows us half a dozen people from a cheap little amusement park in Budapest. There is Liliom himself, rough-neck, barker for Mrs. Muskat's merry-go-round, artist in his own line, incapable in any other. He falls in love with a servant girl, and she with him. They live together in that state of mutual inexpressiveness which is not an uncommon fact in much higher circles of life. When Liliom's inability to express his emotions reaches its climax, when his poverty and shiftlessness prey upon the girl and bring tears, he beats her. To understand this, we must follow Liliom to heaven. The excuse is an attempted robbery in which he takes part in order to make money for the care of the approaching child. A suicide, he enters the sort of heavenly police court which he had been used to on earth. "For the rich, fine music and angels. For us—nothing but justice." The magistrate sends him for sixteen years into the cleansing flames. Then he is to go back to earth and to have the opportunity of winning salvation by one good deed. He returns to earth, chaperoned by the two heavenly policemen who had taken him from his death bed. He sees his wife living in the hard-won contentment of the poor. He offers his child a gift. It is a star that he has stolen from heaven. The mother warns her against taking anything from a tramp; he might have stolen it. The child orders him off. Desperate, inarticulate, maddened by his aching love, he slaps the girl's hand, hard. Wonderingly she turns to her mother. "Did anyone ever slap you, hard, and yet you couldn't feel it at all, mother?" Yes, the woman had known such blows, blows that she could not feel.

Here is a play that ends in poignant pathos, that ranges human character and that brings observation and wit to its aid. It gave the Theatre Guild the finest opportunity that this art theatre has yet enjoyed to wed all the qualities of modern production in a worthy play. The Guild rose magnificently to its opportunity. The cast was nearly per-

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fect. Dudley Digges, Edgar Stehli, Helen Westley, Henry Travers, Philip Wood, and Hortense Alden contributed admirable little studies of minor characters. The two principal figures were played with great illusion and feeling by Joseph Schildkraut and Eva Le Gallienne. Outwardly Schildkraut's work was a triumph in virtuosity. Miss Le Gallienne drove deeper and achieved more of inner impersonation. The play was most excellently directed by Frank Reicher.

To a modern audience, eager for free-ranging and significant drama, filled with both the truth and the verve of life, Lee Simonson's settings completed the perfection of *Liliom*. He has done no better work than this. No one this season has done anything half so good, so complete, so sufficient.

### II.

In *Mary Stuart* the author of *Abraham Lincoln* has written a play that curiously disappoints. Its hour and a half of continuous drama makes it either a one-act play of unusual and sustained power or else another piece that looks forward—or back to the Greeks—in the search for new forms of expression in the theatre. Whatever the truth about the mysterious and maligned Queen of Scots may be, John Drinkwater has written nobly of her and built a tense drama around the murder of Riccio by Darnley. He writes here almost the ideal dialog for the future play of high emotion and romantic color. It is the King's English, the English of the King James' version, strong, simple and vivid. At times it is too close-packed with meaning for the hurried and obtuse theatre; but it is great and beautiful dialog for all that.

The disappointment in *Mary Stuart* lies in the prolog with which Drinkwater has chosen to lengthen but certainly not to clarify his play. The prolog sets two men talking about the *menâgé à trois* which the wife of one of them threatens to set up. The argument that a woman may hold a love great enough for two is not necessarily to be denied. But it has no application to this *Mary Stuart*,



who in Drinkwater's play shows merely physical passion for three thoroughly unworthy rivals. There is nothing in this Mary to indicate that she was really the great lover that the prolog dubs her. Drinkwater's own reason for the tedious and inapropos introduction is that such a woman as Mary might have instructed the young husband. Dramatically that is beside the point. Dramatically also, the prolog suffers from a prolixity and a restatement of idea and emotion which would benefit the drama that follows.

Mixed in merit as *Mary Stuart* proves, it served to display in sudden brilliance one of the finest acting talents in America. The Mary of Clare Eames is one of those sharp and startling flashes of personality joined to technique which are rare in any theatre. Rarer still, the personality has something of clear and dominating decision about it which almost all of our feminine players lack. Miss Eames's playing has that distinction, that imperious command, which we associate with a few of our greatest players, with Irving and with Mansfield. From a cast that is something more than adequate, Frank Reicher's Riccio stood out.

### III.

The American theatre with its long runs has never been an easy and sufficient home for Margaret Anglin. She has needed the activity, variety and executive work of a repertory theatre. Instead she has compromised upon putting on a popular play every year or so, and then dashing off to California in the summer to mount a Greek tragedy in the open air theatre at Berkeley, or joining with the New York Oratorio Society of Walter Damrosch in a bastard performance of Euripides just off Broadway. This spring she revamped one of her California productions, *Iphigenia in Aulis*, in conjunction with Damrosch's organization, and also reproduced for New York audiences the Emile Moreau tragedy *The Trial of Joan of Arc*, which she first acted in San Francisco last summer. In addition she called in Maurice Browne to be associated with her in the direction of the plays.

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*The Trial of Joan of Arc* is a curious mixture. The second act is high and true drama made from the actual questions and answers at the trial of this amazing maid four centuries ago. The rest is cheap French fustian of the Sardou pattern, with the English viceroy pictured as in love with Joan and attempting to rescue her by flight. Miss Anglin appeared only in the second and third acts. In the second act she played powerfully, but to me rather uninterestingly, in the familiar fashion that won her the title of "emotional" actress. In the trial scene, however, she accomplished almost a miracle of impersonation. In figure, gesture, turn of the head, intonation, she managed to convey an intensely moving illusion of the quick and up-borne confidence of a girl facing evil accusers with only faith as her aid. The scene profited greatly from Browne's admirable handling of the crowd of persecuting judges.

In *Iphigenia in Aulis*, with Miss Anglin playing Clytemnestra, the interest shifted from Euripides and his rather disappointing drama to Maurice Browne's lively and imaginative direction of the chorus and the supernumeraries and to the atrocious and impertinent intercessions of Damrosch and his orchestra. Under very difficult conditions of production, Browne managed to instill a great deal of vitality into the movement of the figures of the drama. He made his chorus, as in *Medea*, a unity derived from individual dramatic movement and individual dialog.

### IV.

The Theatre Guild scored a popular success and furnished also an evening of intelligent amusement in its production of *Mr. Pim Passes By*. This comedy of A. A. Milne, the English humorist, is gossamer in plot. The whole of the action and the excuse for the characterization depend on the entrance into a well-behaved English country house of a maundering old man who accidentally gives the impression that he has just met the wife's first husband, who is supposed to be dead, when as a matter of fact it was a different man altogether. The consequences of the news—

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the revelation to the wife of attitudes in her husband that she had somehow never suspected, and the humorous and satiric exposition of character which this entails—are all the more amusing because of the unreality of the cause from which they spring. *Mr. Pim* is a deft and genial comedy that carries criticism for almost all the characters involved. It was not thus with the vacuous drawing room comedies of England ten years ago.

The Guild brought in outsiders—as is its habit—to play two of the important parts. It found in Phyllis Povah another fresh and talented young actress to add to the long list, headed by Margola Gilmore, which the past few seasons have brought to our stage. Better still, in Laura Hope Crews it rediscovered, for the part of the wife, a player who is perhaps our most subtle and skilful comedienne. Dudley Digges played the husband with much technical skill but proved far too acidulous in temperament for a part that becomes easily unsympathetic. When the play was sent uptown to a leased theatre to make room for *Liliom*, Kenneth Douglas, who replaced Digges, demonstrated how important type may be in the casting of comedy.

### V.

It is seldom that we see anything approaching the best of French drama upon our stage. Charles Frohman brought us Rostand, Lavedan, Mirbeau, and a great deal of Bernstein, but never Porto-Riche or Hervieu. Since his death we have seldom had anything at all of real merit. It is now by way of experimental matinees that Porto-Riche's best drama, and perhaps the best work of any French playwright of the conventional school, *L'Amoureuse*, has reached Broadway. This bitter comedy of the slavery of a scientist to a woman who loves him only too well was first adapted to an American locale under the name of *The Tyranny of Love* and later acted as an evening bill with the scene restored to Paris. In the two versions, the casts varied considerably, only Estelle Winwood, as the wife, carrying through both versions her high-wrought and neurotic picture of an amorous woman. In the later version

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Charles Cherry bettered Cyril Keightly's impersonation of the husband, and Brandon Tynan improved upon Georges Flateau's family friend.

### VI.

With special matinees permitting the production of plays of limited appeal and revivals becoming more and more frequent, Broadway slowly takes on as a whole some of the characteristics—though all too few—of the repertory theatre. By grace of the popularity of stars, we have had new glimpses this season of Edward Sheldon's warm and colorful if not very deep play, *Romance*, as well as Hartley Manners' outmoded and trivial contrivance, *Peg o' My Heart*. The latter showed, at least, the great progress in technique which Laurette Taylor has made since she first played Peg. *Romance* recalled in Doris Keane a figure of the most curious and pungent beauty. Vocally it was an excellent performance; as pantomime, it has hardly been excelled in this generation. The Neighborhood Playhouse and a group of actors working under the rather ambitious title of the New York Repertory Theatre brought back two other familiar plays, Arnold Bennett's unconventional comedy of the artist who pretended to be dead, *The Great Adventure*, and one of the few outstanding plays written in English in the past four centuries, Synge's *Playboy of the Western World*. The performance of the Bennett play was adequate; the performance of the Synge, quite as good, it seemed to me, as that given by the Irish Players eight years ago. Thomas Mitchell's *Playboy* and good direction brought out the touch of the eternal soil which makes this comedy what it is. By reviving *John Ferguson* with Dudley Digges repeating his extraordinarily fine performance of the coward, the Theatre Guild took at least one step, if a very late one, towards establishing itself as a repertory theatre.

### VII.

From *The Mob* to the fantastic, witty-wise "legend" of how comedy came into the world and how it prospered,

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which Dion Calthrop and Granville Barker have called *The Harlequinade*; and from that pleasant artificiality to *The Royal Fandango*, a Spanish ballet, is a long road for any theatre. For the Neighborhood Playhouse it has been an easy road, however, and a very delightful one. They acted *The Harlequinade* with considerable skill, and got a great deal of fun out of the scene in the Bronx Art Theatre of the future, where there are no players and the acting is left to the scenery and the lights. *The Royal Fandango* has jolly and spirited music by Gustavo Morales and excellent color and costumes by Ernest de Weerth. But its chief distinction and its splendid distinction lay in the superb and vigorous art of the Festival Dancers, who have contributed so much that is really unique to the little playhouse down in East Grand street.

### VIII.

The modest group which first gave Eugene O'Neill expression in the theatre, the Provincetown Players, have rounded off an exceptional season—exceptional not alone for them, but for any playhouse in America. They began with *The Emperor Jones* and *Diff'rent* and won such a large public with these that they found it necessary to increase the number of performances given each play and finally to export the productions to far Broadway. They were fortunate to be able to follow this success with two plays by other directors in the organization which more than satisfied their special audience. The most successful was *The Spring* by George Cram Cook. This drama of psychical research weds theory upon unconscious and supernatural phenomena with a rather violent and melodramatic personal story springing out of it. The author has not only presented a most interesting body of speculation upon those things in heaven and earth that Horatio's philosophy fails to dream of; he has orientated them most skilfully for the purposes of the plot by means of an opening scene in 1813, close to the same spot by the Mississippi where the action of the six succeeding episodes of the play proper take place.

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There is, both in the method of the play and its substance, a very interesting and suggestive hint of the possibilities of developing dramatic themes for our future theatre. The Provincetown Players acted *The Spring* rather better than anything they attempted this season except *The Emperor Jones*.

Susan Glaspell's *Inheritors* compares curiously with her husband's *The Spring*. It is laid in the same Blackhawk country. It utilizes a prolog in an earlier day. Its idiom of expression seems almost the same. And in its story of how the people of a Western university met and suffered from the black reaction that has spread over the United States since the war, there is the same radical courage that Cook displays in his handling of the psychic. It does not seem, however, so moving, fine as it is in many respects.

From the success of this year, the Provincetown Players plan to go on to the building of a new theatre along distinctly original and advanced lines. In stage and auditorium they will demonstrate the same forward-looking attitude toward production which they have shown in making an opening for the playwright their primary work. Thus they round off a singularly heartening season with the promise of creating, at least in embryo, a sound and adventurous repertory theatre for New York.

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The drawing of the Arena Goldoni, on the cover, is by G. Nelson and is reproduced from *A Living Theatre*, the prospectus of Gordon Craig's School of the Theatre, which occupied that building in Florence. The Arena Goldoni was built in 1818.

# THE VOICE IN THE THEATRE

BY STARK YOUNG

**I**F the psychology of our day has stressed anything it is the fact that the life of the mind rests on historically ancient processes, on the constituted matter of the universe. That is to say we are grown out of and into Nature; we are a part of its texture, of its tissue even; and what we call ourselves is only the little conscious point at which we connect with the whole; and through which we enter on a conception of the whole. The life of the mind has the same relation to Nature as the fragrance of a flower has to the earth; our consciousness is the light fragrance of a flower, but this fragrance is the odor of reality. It is only through all this accumulated history that is in us, the remembering organisms, the unforgetting cells and growths, that we share in the life of the world. And only through the exploitation and use of this sharing can we express for the rest of the whole the living part of it that we are.

That is to say that art depends first of all on the life of the body, that body which is at the same time the ancient storehouse of the forms and pulses and directions of a whole; and yet is its feeling organ, its every moment's intimate perceiving. In the art of the theatre, then, to throw away such an avenue as is the sense of sound is short-sighted and suicidal. It is a way of limiting the expression of life, of forgetting the necessary earth, of telling lies. And in our theatre it is a fact that sound is almost a forgotten thing. The voice is used in our theatre almost entirely as an articulate medium. But a part of every truth is its inarticulateness; all the half-conscious elements, delicate implications, the radiant and shadowy emanations, that make up every human truth and that words can never express. And sound itself has significance. The articulate meaning of the word *pain* is a symbolistic accident; the sound of it goes vaguely but farther in. Regardless of word-concepts the mere voice is another medium to express the ancient and imminent life that lives itself in us.

## THE VOICE IN THE THEATRE

Everyone knows the part a dramatist's sound takes in his complete effect. Shakespeare obviously is always recognized first of all by the ear. Very much of Galsworthy's failure to convince me, I think, lies in the abandoned drought of his music. And I believe that one of the obstacles in Ibsen's progress with us, something that makes his work seem dry and dutiful and Euclidian, is the sterile sound of the acting translation; a humble ear would take Mrs. Alving for Madam President calling the ladies to order and stating her case for their consideration. And every actor has his own sound, his voice. And every country's theatre has its own quality of voice.

The horrors of the American voice spread to our stage, naturally. I listen in the New York theatre for a beautiful voice, for a fine voice, an expressive voice. I do not often find it, not often, sometimes, yes. I listen for a sense of style in the use of the voice. I find that even less often. A sense of style in the voice would mean a constant variation of the quality to suit the kind of play it carries or the mood. In a comedy of manners like *The School for Scandal* the voice would be clear, finished, the lips expert, the tongue striking well on the teeth; the tone would go up and down but always be sure of its place in the throat, be crisp, shining, in hand, like the satin and gold of the furniture and costumes, the rapier at the wrist, the lace over it, the worldliness and the wit. In Chekhov it would have the last naturalness, every closeness to feeling and impulse that the moment reveals. In Shakespeare a range of elaborate music, suited to the style, a clearness, with a warmth of poetic emotion. In D'Annunzio's drama the voice would have to be rich and sensuous, metallic, shading infinitely, the voice of a degenerate god. And so on through the styles and moods of all drama.

Every language has its voice. Though it must be remembered that the voice is inextricably tied up with its language. We complain of the Italian singer's voice as "white"; but Italian is a "white" language. They com-



plain of the German tone as "dark"; but German, and English too, are "dark" languages. Mimi Aguglia's voice, amazing in Italian, animal, pathetic, inexhaustible, becomes light and uninteresting when she speaks English. Ben-Ami is one of the few foreigners I have heard who can place exactly and naturally in English the tone they have always used. And Doris Keane is the only actor I have ever seen who could reproduce the Italian tone precisely in English. In a way the voice of a country's theatre, like the English or French or Italian, gets to be as definite perhaps as any actor's.

The characteristic of the American stage voice is, apart from bad enunciation, a tone driven through the nose, an inflexible upper lip, a very insecure placement in the throat, and a tendency to monotony. It has the distinction of being the worst voice on any stage in the world; and has very likely contributed no little to the success of the silent drama of the screen. And so we are always admiring the English voice. Often enough, as everybody knows, the quality is pleasanter in the English voice than in the American; that goes without saying. But I think that very much of its supposed excellence on the stage is really a matter of superior enunciation; it is pleasant to hear the English after too much of the Broadway language. The chief characteristic of the English male voice on the stage, however, is a kind of dry, balanced quality, the balance of a country house and the dry poise of the town club. It suits the comedy of manners admirably, and character parts. It has whimsicality, it has urbanity, the light touch. For tragedy on the elevated or very poignant scale it is a very poor voice indeed, despite the British claims. It has not enough bottom, its range is not wide and fluent enough; its resonance in the head is limited; it lacks mettle. It can be simple and quiet if it does not get too much of the breath in it and become prosaic. Most of all it lacks fine, virile roundness and volume. And all too often this voice betrays self-consciousness; an English tragic actor sometimes has a way of seeming infatuated with merely hearing him-

self speak. The women on the English stage have very often charming voices, suited to comedy, to romantic plays, or sentimental, and to noble or delicate tragedy; but not for great, passionate tragic moments. They have the English tendency toward affectation too often, especially in sounding the *s*, where an overhissing occurs, and not rarely in the silly Georgian lisp. And a sort of bellowing tone comes in also and is admired very frequently in these actresses, a tone that is large but a little hoarse, deep but not round, and used too much for its own sake. Moreover the English throat, in general, is not always free, and frequently gives a sort of choking effect. Too often the breath is heard rather than the tone, and the vowels are lost; or the sound is thrown against the roof of the mouth when it should vibrate the bones of the head. As in most other English things compared to the French or Italian, there is little sense of style in the English voice. Britons never will be slaves, and least of all in technical standards; and however pleasing, however fine, well-bred and even noble an English actor's voice may be, it is apt to be arbitrary, individual, and unfinished.

The French voice has style and training. Like most French things it has been made adequate for its own uses, as far as those uses go. In a burlesque it has all the musical resources of the jungle. In a drawing-room comedy it has every kind of variety and breeding. In witty farce the French voice is like the mind itself, leaping about over the furniture; it is clear, high, deep, brittle, inane, persuasive. But in one of their own tragedies like those of Racine the voice of an actor like Mounet Sully is complete as a noble orchestra; it has timbre, volume, melancholy flat tones, and a prolonged and even resonance never heard on English-speaking stages. Like Bernhardt's it is an artificial quality, very much finished, trained, electrified, charged with magnificent nervous power. In one respect only does the French voice fall far beneath what I have heard in Italian theatres: that is in the last accent of naturalistic tragedy.

The Italian voice is the most tragic of all, in the tragedy of the earth, the heart, the supreme rendering of a surface of life that reveals at the same time the inner content. There was something in Duse's voice that reminded you of Dante at his best; a trembling inevitability of effect, a passion of transparency above the life it expressed. There is no voice with a quality so immediate, so forlorn and irrevocable as the Italian. Not any voice so easily placed in the throat. The tone is open, it comes straight out, with no impediment or forcing down the throat or up against the nose. I remember when *The Bacchanals* was given in the Roman Theatre at Fiesole the voice of Agave, and when she said „Addio, padre!" The uplifted hands of the chorus below her, the shadows of the columns on the stone, the fluttering of the leaves nearby, seemed all to serve that voice and to be summed up and expressed in it. It was the voice of the earth itself, over which she was to wander forever. It was a white voice, clear, exact, fatalistic, the voice of the animal and the soul. Only in styles that are more elaborate or artificial, whether in farce or comedy or tragedy, does the French voice surpass the Italian. But then only in elaboration and artifice. The Italian remains always more natural, more profound, more robust and subtle, more abundantly endowed, more easily resourceful.

It is, of course, a platitude in aesthetics to say that music is the most ideal of the arts. That music can be the thing itself where words can only be the concept of it or painting one selected phenomenon. In the light of this you may say that the tone an actor uses can move us more than any other thing about him; the word he speaks gives the concept, the gesture he makes exhibits a single phenomenon; but the voice may be anger itself or longing and go straight as music does to the same emotion in us. So that there is something strange and ironical in the realization of how much more our theatres—and our education for that matter—have cultivated the eye rather than the ear. We have all sorts of instructions about stage production, about light and its uses and diversities, about the effect of colors and

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their combinations. In Gordon Craig's design for *Electra* we have the idea of that door, high and fateful and unrevealing, the domination of visual proportion over our sense. Through a fine gift like Robert Edmond Jones' we have sometimes had light and color and line made as ideal almost and as abstract as music. But, after all, that is the realm of the visual, it is eye learning.

So that we may well recall what education the Greeks thought wise for the uses of their sons. Philosophy, rhetoric, oratory and recitation, and music, were the main branches of their endeavor. Sculpture and painting and architecture, those arts whose life is in the eye, they learned to know by seeing them and by the images arising from the perfecting of their bodies in the daily palestra. But often enough the philosophy that they learned, the history and poetry and logic, came through discourses and argument and reading aloud, and much of what they knew well they may never have seen in writing; they had received it in sound images instead of visual. The Greek ear was trained to hear the value of syllables and rhythm and cadence in speech, the modes of music and the quality of the voice in reading and singing. Through years of discipline and practice a Greek arrived at this perfection of exercise and perception.

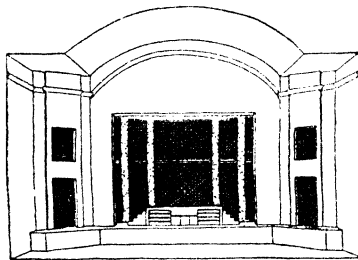
In the Theatre of Dionysos the lighting was that of the sun; the scene was but slightly varied either through shifts or through light. The gestures were simple and restrained, as we may infer from the spirit and the style of the plays, and may be sure of from the difficulties that the costume, the onkos, the padding, and the high-soled cothurnus would have put in the way of animated motions. The expression of the mask remained unchanged, but it was made so as to serve as a resonator for the actor's voice. So that the larger part of the effect in the Greek theatre was due to the voices, trained as we train for the opera and exerted for a trained public taste. However beautiful the lines of those garments may have been, their grave and exquisite rhythms and their subtlety of color in the

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bright air, the blowing on them of the wind from the Bay of Salamis, it was the voices of the actors that achieved much of that effect of tragic beauty. The words of the dramatist were conveyed through the voice, animated by the beauty and variety of its music; and sometimes heightened further still by the music of pipes and strings that followed the voice, dilating further the poetic meaning, making it yet more poignant and unerring.

"Cynthus aurem vellit, et admonuit," Virgil wrote, when the god of poetry came to him; and Milton, translating, "Phoebus replied, and touched my trembling ears."

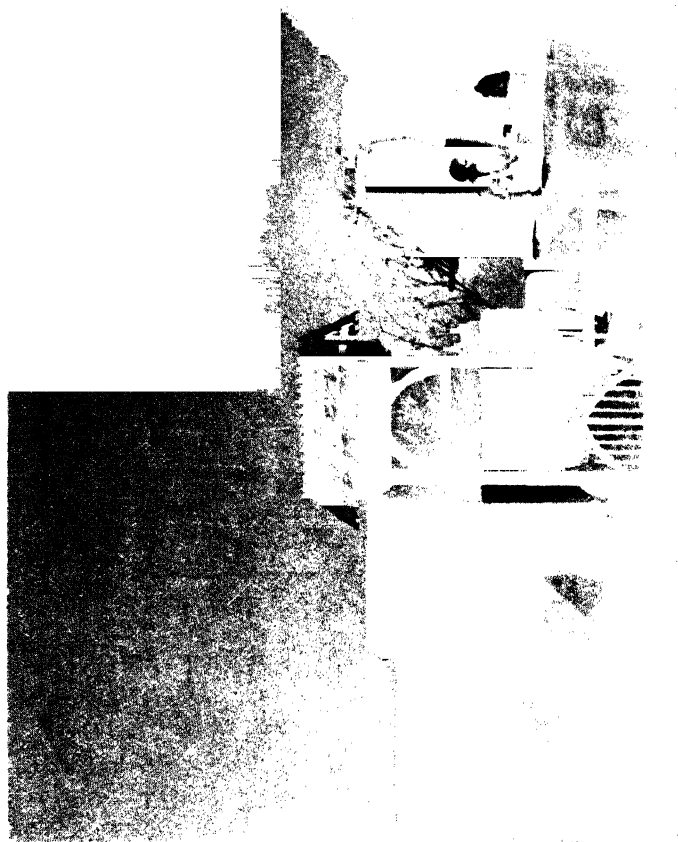
To all that antique world the ear was the seat of memory. And memory is half our life, and more than half of all beauty.



LE THEATRE DU VIEUX COLOMBIER



The scene at the railway embankment in *Liliom*, as produced by the New York Theatre Guild. Settings and lights by Lee Simonson. (Photograph by Francis Bruguière.) See page 175.



The idyllic last scene in *Julien*, as set and lighted by Lee Simonson. (Photograph by Francis Bruguière.)

## THE PALIO

BY HIRAM K. MODERWELL

**S**EVENTEEN amateur athletic clubs and their rivalries were the impulse of it, and yet the result is quite the most magnificent bit of "pure theatre" I have seen in Europe since the war. Rival athletic clubs!—they abound also in New York slums.

The Palio, the traditional horse-race of the Tuscan city of Siena, is of course something more than the annual rivalry of seventeen sporting clubs. It is tradition, accumulated as thick as the statues on the facade of Siena's cathedral. It is that astonishing theatrical sense that bubbles up in every Italian (until, alas, he becomes director of a theatre). But I asked myself from what germs the Palio sprang and whether such germs sprout nowhere in the world save in Siena. Certainly, I admitted, Siena's tradition and Siena's atmosphere are her own and cannot be exported. But rival city gangs (that is what Siena's contrade or wards amount to) exist everywhere in the world. And because Siena's gangs happened to decorate and ritualize their rivalries, we have the splendor of the Palio.

The Palio is held every year on August 16, the day after Assumption, and also, in less pretentious form, on July 2. Once, somewhere in the twelfth century, it was a ceremony in honor of the Virgin Mary. Later, as the town became rowdy after the fashion of the time, the ceremony became a contest, with horse-races included, between the noble families. Their rivalries were bitter, often bloody, but at least ardent. Needless to say, they appropriated the public square as though it were their private play-ground, and placed in all the galleries their invited friends. But presently aristocratic Siena became democratic Siena, after the pattern of Florence. The populace took over the government, and with it the Communal Palace and the Piazza del Campo in front of it, and became moral heir to the activities



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of the nobility. In time, therefore, it took over this horse-race. The various athletic clubs of the city seem to have become a de facto executive committee to manage the event. The clubs put up their horses, announced themselves as representatives of the contrade or wards in which they resided, and summoned the good citizens of each contrada to come out on race day and cheer for his ward's victory.

I emphasize this sketch of the Palio's history, which is the best I have been able to get from available books, to say nothing of the townsfolk of Siena, who know nothing save that it has always been. I emphasize it, because it seems to show that the ceremony has dramatic content. It is no mere play pretend, but a living event. It has action, purpose, suspense. In short it is a drama. I think our popular festivals (especially in America and especially those organized by committee) are likely to fail because they are mummeries. Beautiful they may be, and symbolically truthful. But if the participants feel that their parts are written for them, that they must go through set motions and possibly make themselves look silly in the eyes of their friends, in order to please some invisible stage director, it can be no popular festival. Perhaps it would not be advisable to seek to inject drama into a Shakespeare memorial festival by instituting a race between East Side athletic clubs. Yet reverse the thing: an annual race between Italian athletic clubs of the East Side might grow into a splendid Dante memorial festival.

Somewhere, drama, suspense, expectancy comes into the thing if it is real at all. The ancient druid rituals, which have their remnants in the English sword dances, were instinct with suspense, though every gesture was fixed. For they were the ceremonies which were to persuade the gods to give a fair spring or a good harvest. Would the gods get the hint? Every participant was trembling with suspense. And this suspense seems to inhere still in the sword dance as a half-forgotten relic of the ancient drama of which it was a part—that most absorbing drama in the world, the fertilization of nature. The quality of the sword

dance in England, as Cecil Sharp describes it, is that of anything but a mummery.

The Senesi participate in the Palio ceremonials passionately, exuberantly. Church and State lend it their dignity, and use their high powers to give it solemnity. The city government, besides being responsible for the transformation of the public square into a race course, presides as a commission of control over the preliminary arrangements. It draws lots, to see which ten of the contrade shall enter the race (for the course is too narrow to accomodate seventeen horses). It issues a solemn announcement that in this year of Our Lord 19. . the following contrade shall run, to wit: She-Wolf, Eagle, Giraffe, Screech-Owl, Porcupine, Wave, Unicorn, Tower, Caterpillar and Snail. It arranges for the policing of the grounds, the erection of stands, and the like. But here the State steps down and leaves the ceremony to the seventeen rival wards—and to the Church.

The strangest part of the affair, to the foreigner, is the part taken in it by the Church. I had heard of it, and went, still incredulous, to see if it could be true.

At four o'clock in the afternoon of the race, I went to the church of my chosen contrada, the Wave. For an hour the children of the district had been standing expectantly before the door. Presently approached the cavalcade: six pages carrying spears or short-swords; two standard bearers carrying the traditional flags of the contrada; two drummers; a warrior clad in full armor topped with a fearsome plume on his helmet; the jockey mounted on the contrada's parade horse, and finally the object of all the excitement, the race-horse himself, saddled only with a velvet cloth of blue and white and plumed in proudly in the same colors. The pages with their parti-colored suits and their long blond curls, looked for all the world like the Florentine young men in Benozzo Gozzoli's frescoes in San Gimignano.

Very solemnly the whole blue-and-white group passed into the church, followed by a boisterous, gossiping crowd. The race-horse was gravely led up to the very steps of the side-altar. The priest, who had been waiting to receive

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him, now produced a prayer book and silence fell over the church. The priest read a bit of the service in Latin, then making the sign of the cross sprinkled holy water over the horse. And finally, taking the silver and jewelled cross from the altar, he gave it to the jockey to kiss. An instant's silence, then the church broke into a cheer, and the whole assembled contrada elbowed its way out into the piazza. Thus was Onda (and thus were all the other nine of his rivals) blessed.

Then the party made its way, drums beating, to the palace of the archbishop, facing the Cathedral square. Here the more neutral inhabitants of Siena were waiting to receive it. The party stopped, the drums ceased beating, as the archbishop appeared smiling at an upper window. Then the flag-bearers began the traditional play with the standards, twisting and twirling them, flashing them under their arms, behind their backs, and between their legs, finishing with a great flourish by throwing them high into the air. Again the drums began beating and the party started on an arrogant demonstration through the city streets.

And exactly the same thing did Screech-Owl and Porcupine and all the other "running" contrade that afternoon.

The great square of the municipal palace was crowded with merry-makers by six o'clock, when the gaudily dressed soldiery began ceremoniously to clear the course. Here were all the appurtenances of a town fair—the vendors of every little festive thing from fortunes to balloons and candy. After the gates had been finally closed and a pistol shot announced that the ceremony was about to begin, the solemn procession was seen emerging from the court-yard of the municipal palace. First the trumpeters, playing the traditional Palio march alternately on enormous straight trumpets and on huge rounded ones." Then followed the contrade, one after another, each with its outfit of drummers and standard-bearers, and each with its cherished horse. After brief intervals the procession would stop for the flag play. At such moments the course was a kaleidoscope of flashing color—the white, black and orange of She-

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Wolf; the red and white of Giraffe; the purple, white and black of Tower, and all the rest. Thus in solemn stages the procession made its way around the course. Last of all came the Caruccio of the city—that car which throughout the Middle Ages carried the standard of Siena in battle, and was as sacred to the Senesi as was the Ark of the Covenant to the Hebrews. In the Caruccio, borne aloft by four pages, was the Palio itself, the banner which was to be the prize. It was of white silk. Above was painted the Madonna, who from the Twelfth century to the Twentieth has ever been the patroness of the race. Below a gaudy knight full armored upon his charger.

I shall not describe the race which carried all hearts whizzing three times around the course, since I am not, alas, competent to describe in technical language so exalted a "sporting event." It may be observed, however, that the race has more potentialities for surprise than any in Saratoga. The course is uneven, and at one sharp turn is so steeply pitched downhill that it means injury or even death to the careless jockey. The riding is done bareback, and it is part of the game to whack your rival's horse over the nose with a padded club, to make him shy or, if possible, throw his rider. I am all too weak a vessel to describe adequately how Snail took the lead at the start, closely followed by Porcupine, how She-Wolf and two others fell, and how Unicorn at the last moment just nosed ahead of Porcupine and over the rope, the winner. I can only say that within five seconds thereafter all the young devils of the Unicorn contrada set up a shouting and a parading that lasted until morning.

Throughout the whole celebration, the festival element, the theatrical performance, easily dominates over the "sporting event." Ceremony, show, gaiety, are the meaning of this race to the Senesi.

Its deep rooting in localism and tradition makes it the despair of anyone who might think to copy the Palio elsewhere by fiat of a committee. The Palio cannot be imitated. It grew; it was not made. Yet I think its very tradi-

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tionalism can give a hint to those who long to see popular expressions of beauty in America. For the elements out of which the Palio grew, fierce sectional rivalry and innate love of display, are duplicated in many American cities. The gangs of the American slums (of which Lincoln Steffens was the first, as he has remained almost the only, interpreter) are the modern equivalent of those irresponsible bands which used to make night riotous (and not a little unsafe) in mediæval Italian towns. I do not believe that our gangs can be half as mischievous as were these of the thirteenth century in Italy. But why can there not grow from their fierce activities and rivalries and from their even fiercer love of show, something like the Palio of old Siena?

“No joy ever sank deep enough for singing;  
Trouble and all the sorrowful ways of man  
Must stir the sad unrest that ends in song.  
Joy seeks but peace and silence and still thought;  
But those who cannot weep must sing for ease,  
And in the sound forget the thought that smote it.”

From *The Crier by Night*, by Gordon Bottomley.

## "TICKETS ARE NOT FOR SALE"

### THE THEATRE UNDER THE SOVIETS

**I**N 1918 Oliver M. Saylor observed and recorded the persistence of the Russian theatre under the first year of the Soviet government. Since then we have heard much of famine, rebellion, pestilence and tyranny, of artists exiled and Russia on the brink of dissolution, always from anti-Soviet sources. Now through the courtesy and assistance of Fania Mindell, who translated Gorky's *Night Lodging* for the Arthur Hopkins production last year, the *Theatre Arts Magazine* is able to present a most interesting glimpse of the Moscow and Petrograd theatres during the last ten days of February, 1921.

From evidence in the files of *Pravda*, *Izvestia* and *Biednota*, the Russian newspapers, the theatre seems to continue much along the lines described in *The Russian Theatre Under the Revolution*, with one or two most interesting changes. The Art Theatre is still open and still playing *The Blue Bird* and *Night Lodging*. The two Studio Theatres of Stanislawski's house are active, playing *Twelfth Night*, *Youth*, *The Deluge*, (which Arthur Hopkins produced here) and *The Cricket on the Hearth*. The radical Kamerny Theatre is mounting Claudel's *The Tidings Brought to Mary* for its first performances in Russia. Though its founder, Balieff, is in Paris, the super-cabaret, The Bat, continues to give *The Green Cockatoo* by Schnitzler and various bizarre entertainments. *Boris Godunov* and *Pique Dame* are on at the Great Theatre. Chaliapine appears at the Academy of Opera and Ballet (formerly the Marinsky Theatre) in *Khovantchina*. Other houses announcing changes of bill are the Music-Drama Theatre, the Dramatic Mono Theatre, (*William Tell*), Safonov's Theatre (*The Storm* and *Coq d'Or*), the Tarovsat Theatre, the Studio of the Jewish Comedy Theatre, the Children's Theatre, the Dramatic Academy, formerly the Alexandrinsky (*Revisor*), the Academy of Comic Opera, formerly the

## "TICKETS ARE NOT FOR SALE"

Michailovsky Theatre (*The Bells of Corneville*), the Theatre of Comic Opera, the Ukrainsky Theatre, (*Mazeppa*), the Small Theatre, the Palace Theatre, the Vassili Ostrovsky Theatre, the Free Comedy Theatre, the Narodny Dom, the Zamarotsky Theatre, the Musical Comedy Theatre (*The Poor Millionaire* and *Taras Bulba*), the Government Studio (an evening of Gorky), the Dramatic Academy (*The Idiot*), the Great Dramatic Theatre (*The Merchant of Venice*).

Two arresting developments appear in the "Theatres of R. S. F. S. R."; these are the Federated Workmen's Theatres of Soviet Russia. Three of these (numbered, but not named) flourish in Moscow. They give mainly plays of a distinctly revolutionary character——*Internationale*, *The Last Bourgeois*, *The Workers' Savings*, and classics like *William Tell*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Uriel Akosta*. *The Dawn*, which seems to be Verhaeren's proletarian rhapsody, never before produced except privately in Brussels, and considered unproduceable even by the adventurous Meyerhold, is performed at one of these playhouses. *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *Ruy Glas* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, acted at these workmen's theatres, indicate a lively interest in romance as well as revolution.

New ventures of a similar nature to the Theatre of the R. S. F. S. R. appear in the Association of Art and Labor, which gives *The Decembrist Kharhovsky* and *The Christmas Carol*; and particularly in the district houses such as Lenin's Club, where *Robespierre* is given and the announcement at the Factory of V. E. K. of *Lyndgard & Co.* and *Uriel Akosta*, and at the Factory of Givartovsky of *Marat* and *The Broken Jug*. Special performances to celebrate the anniversary of the Red Army were arranged for February 23 at half a dozen theatres.

With the government owning and managing practically all the theatres, and cooperating with the unions in educational work, something approaching the Greek system of free admission to the drama has developed. Usually one sees above the announcements: "Tickets not for sale."



Six examples of expressionism applied to motion pictures in Germany. Here we have the attempt to express the emotions of the artist through pictorial means independent of the physical reality of the object pictured or its spiritual impression. Obviously the effort to make a natural object or an abstract shape express a sensation not felt or suggested by it but present in the artist, the actor, or the spectator, has an interesting application to the scenic problem. The artists of the "Sturm" group in Berlin have attempted to apply expressionism to the theatre; but examples of the work presented at their matinees is not available. The same group worked, however, upon the fantastic film, *Dr. Caligari*, from which the first four pictures are taken. Above is an exterior in which the violent lines of the path and the bridge produced an extraordinarily vivid sense of rapid and distraught movement in the bizarre figures of the film.

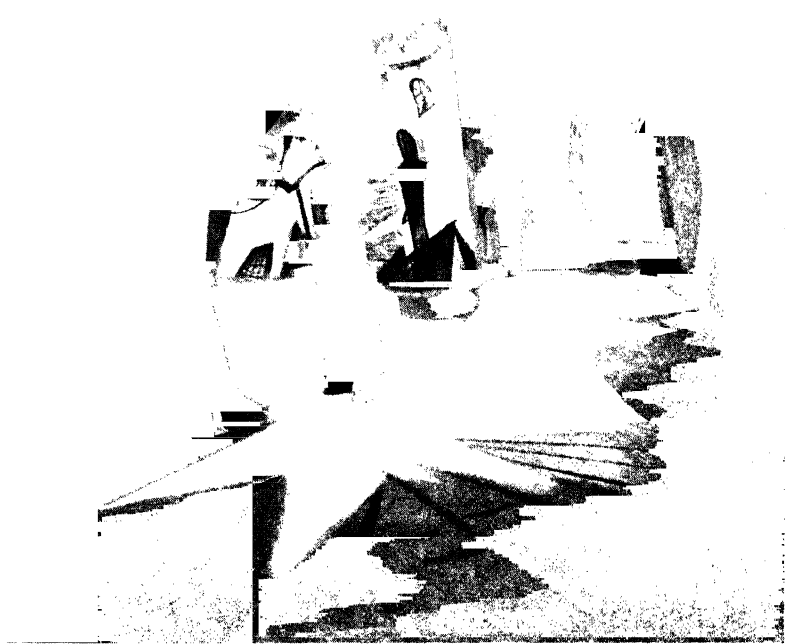




The Sleep-walker of *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, drawn through the garden toward the door of the heroine's home.



The Sonnambulist's escape along difficult and distorted rooftops and fire-walls in *Dr. Caligari*.



The fantastic and oppressive town in *Dr. Caligari*, with the walls of its houses toppling inward upon the streets.



The mediaeval Ghetto designed by Hans Poelzig, Max Reinhardt's architect, for a motion picture, *Der Golem*. An attempt to convey a sense of dreary decrepitude in the Jewish quarter of ancient Prague, with houses that talk a Hebrew jargon and hovels that whisper.



The house of the rabbi in *Dr. Golem*. Here expressionism is applied to plastic forms instead of to painted flats as in *Dr. Caligari*. Observe the free and arbitrary treatment of Gothic ribs and vaultings, and the spiral stairway ingeniously provided for a striking scene of pursuit.

## LONELY PLACES

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE EDITORS OF THE  
THEATRE ARTS MAGAZINE

BY MAURICE BROWNE

C. P. R. westbound,  
May 6th, 1921.

DEAR FRIENDS:

Seven years ago my wife, Rupert Brooke and I were eastbound from New York, and—then or thenabouts— I wrote from shipboard an open letter on the theatre to the Editor of *Drama*. Today Rupert Brooke is wind-blown dust, and my wife and I are westbound; and I write on the train an open letter to you—about the theatre?—about molehills on the horizon which may be mountains?—perhaps about wider and less lonely places than Forty-Second Street and Broadway, perhaps about lonelier and more secret ones even than they. Seven years. . . .

“And in seven years they say a man  
Through all his cells so utterly  
Changes, that he no more is who  
He was before, and they say true.”

As I read in the last Theatre Arts Mr. Roeder's—obituary of me, I was about to say; well, let the word stand—I wondered what manner of man it had been who was thus commemorated in noble and burning prose, and what relation that man had borne

“to us whom life has taught  
Only to trust where we can touch,  
And there, and then, not overmuch,”—

though I knew well enough that truly it was no dead self of mine whom Mr. Roeder honored, but the integrity of his own heart which honored him. It gladdened me to have the privilege of standing godfather, as it were, at such a birth; but the infant's paternity puzzled me.

In a not dissimilar case, Solomon took a shorter cut to

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truth than is possible for us who try to know ourselves. That road is long, and it leads further than Times Square, further than failure or success, further even than the office of Theatre Arts or the praises of a loved friend. It leads beyond the Rockies and the Atlantic into a place lonelier and more secret than either; it leads past praise or blame, past good and evil, past even the knowledge of our own ignorance, into that immeasurable solitude, our own heart. And I do not yet find in mine the right to such fatherhood as is assigned me.

For in it there is an empty place crying to be filled, an unborn baby crying for birth, the little pitiful voice of a shadow-child crying out upon the author of an editorial in that same number of Theatre Arts, who wrote: "We are at a new turn of the road where not the play—but the producer's the thing." If that were true, then God help us all.

As I look back over the last ten years in the American theatre, some order slowly begins to be apparent in a battlefield where the smoke and dust have lain thick,—too thick at times for those of us in them to tell which way the fight was going or even how the lines were arrayed, and a restatement of the one main thing for which we have been fighting seems desirable. Little Theatres and the many kindred organizations which have sprung up in America during the last decade have too often forgotten that there is something at stake. Well, there is—at least in the mind of the man who has had the misery of being dubbed the founder of "The Little Theatre Movement" in America, though God and Euripides know that, when my wife and I started one of the three first American "Little Theatres"—simply because we could not afford to start a big one—nothing was further from our minds than founding a "Movement," still less a movement in favour of *little* theatres, peculiarly impoverishing things. Accordingly I make no apologies for saying nothing new in this letter, nor for scolding like Zarathustra from his middle-aged arm-chair—my "disciples" for being so confoundedly arche-

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typical, nor for rehashing Sunday's dinner without even a poached egg.

Some ten years ago, then, it would seem that the artist and the craftsman in the American theatre attacked the real-estate speculator—in those days we called him the commercial manager, through a confusion of persons with functions—and that a forlorn hope was turned to triumph by the “movies,” that, sublimely unconscious of craftsmanship or art, also attacked—solely for their own financial ends—the same enemy as ours, but with, very literally, all the foundries of the munition-makers behind them; the real-estate speculator could not withstand the Dupont Company's purchase of the moving-picture industry; and the theatre, too small game now for such big guns, was left as carrion to be fought for by lovers and vultures, those who were interested in it for its own sake and those who were interested in it for theirs.

In this new battle three main issues were directly joined: stage-decoration, acting, and the *play*. The fight on the first had already been virtually won by the artist—and I am proud to remember that it was both joined and won on the stage of the Chicago Little Theatre, by my wife and Raymond Johnson, even before Sam Hume's exhibit or Granville Barker's “discovery” of Robert Edmond Jones, and long before the rhinoceros-hided magnates of the theatre knew that six such midges as we were biting them, (I doubt if they know it yet, or ever will). The danger now, it seems to me, as Mr. Roeder has suggested, is that the stage-decorator, taking his art too seriously, should forget that it, like *all* the arts of the theatre, is an *applied* art and should seek to give it a value *per se*, which by its very nature it can never have; this is, I feel, a particular danger in stage-lighting. I believe that I was one of the first men in America to maintain that stage-lighting is an art (how many of the “successful” stage-decorators of today remember that, less than ten years ago, this claim was greeted with ridicule and abuse, or ignored?), and



## THEATRE ARTS MAGAZINE

therefore I may perhaps be allowed to stress this point a little:

There are those of us who recognize in the color-organ a new art-medium of almost incalculable value; who, like Cortez and his men, have

“Looked at each other with a wild surmise,  
Silent, upon a peak in Darien,”

watching Mr. Wilfrid play melodies of light and color in that laboratory which the wisdom and foresight of Mr. Bragdon and Mr. Brice have built; and, as we watched, we who had marvelled in Hellerau at von Saltzmann's lighting—the master of us all—knew that a greater than von Saltzmann was here. And yet, even among us who realize this, there are those who feel that this new thing in the world is, by itself, for all its loveliness and wonder, no more than the trappings and investiture of art. Mr. Wilfrid, it is true, profoundly disagrees with those who feel this; he holds that the “music” of the color-organ is art in its own right and needs none other; and, certainly, though it may be generations before a public can be trained to “hear” with his eyes, yet there is no one living who dares dogmatically say that he is wrong. But music itself is a potent argument against him—to us at least who find the folk-song a higher form of art than the sonata; and poetry with her own hands is scrubbing floors in the theatre today—learning to serve before she can rule again. So with the artist-electrician of tomorrow—let him beware lest too high ambition for his own art blind him to that Beauty of which his is but a part, that Beauty whose earthly likeness is hidden for an hour by hucksters in a den of thieves.

Round the second point of issue between the self-seeker in the theatre and its disinterested lover, a longer and a fiercer fight has been waged, and the fight is not yet finished; for, though the enemy gives more and more ground, there is fat country in his rear. For the theatre, which attracts the intelligent and the sensitive, attracts therefore the selfish and the vain; and Duse, who said that all actors must

## LONELY PLACES

die of the plague before the theatre could be saved, was unduly gentle. Boiling oil might do it, or one day in a poet's life; but even the war failed: human nature does not change, and the "movies" are the only cure. That great liberator buys the actor from the artist, mercifully for both, and once again the theatre is left free—save for the vultures—that a new generation may enter in, brought up in a new tradition which is not concerned with self.

I remember a famous actor coming to the Chicago Little Theatre years ago, when my wife and I were struggling to fence-in a field where the new technique of acting might grow, and saying, as he painfully and impatiently watched the simplicity and sincerity of our players: "It cannot be done; my dear Mr. Browne, *it simply can not be done.*" And that at a time when Lady Gregory had already visited America and shown us all the way. Well, it took some six years and ten months to do it,—from our first rehearsal in Chicago early in 1912 till our production of *A Doll's House* in Salt Lake City seven winters later; then only did we know that we had mastered the first elements of our craft. For simplicity and sincerity are not enough in the theatre: *the technique that projects them is essential.* And, unless they acquire it, Little Theatres and their like, for all their good intentions, not merely plough the sand but give fertile ground to the enemy,—even when, as sometimes happens, their professions are modest.

For the "old-school" actor has technique almost as often as the "new-school" player lacks it; and, since he is able to convey to his audience that which he has to say, it is neither surprising nor unjust that he should condemn those who are still inarticulate. The pity is that he so seldom *has* anything to say, that he has too often technique and nothing else, Broadway having bought, corrupted, or destroyed that fine spirit of service and that fearless love of beauty, which originally, more likely than not, led him, when he too was an amateur, to the theatre; while those who "employ" him—save the mark—have forgotten, if they ever knew, the impulses and needs from which the old technique

sprang. For it did not spring fullgrown and goddess- (or gorgon-) like, as some both of its exponents and of its opponents would have us believe, from the head or side of any Categorical Theatric Imperative, but was formed piecemeal to suit their own immediate purposes by men and women working on an actual stage; and it is purposes akin to theirs which have formed and are forming the new technique of acting today. The "new-school" player is discovering, what the "old-school" actor has forgotten, the *why* of his craft. Similarly the painter and the poet have rediscovered in our own time Chinese graphic art as poignant and living beauty, and Greek tragedy as thrilling drama to be acted *now*; and these discoveries have taught them a thousand things which they did not know they knew about themselves and their own arts. When men and women find that they have something which they urgently need to say, they teach themselves to say it convincingly,—convincingly above all to those whom they most need to convince, their peers. And the first lesson they learn is that nothing can be said convincingly which is not said beautifully, and that nothing can be said beautifully which is not said sincerely. As Keats knew. And the second lesson they learn is that nothing can be said convincingly which is said without mastery, and that nothing can be said with mastery which is said without experience. Just as beauty cannot be where there is baseness or self-seeking, so truth cannot be where there is ignorance or fear; and experience overcomes ignorance and casts out fear. Technique is that experience which enables us to say convincingly the things we feel deeply.

Thinking thus, it is easy to see why the old technique of acting and the new will not blend. Though their roots are in the same soil, and though there are leaders of both "schools" genuinely eager to work together for a common end, yet these cannot escape consciousness of the younger generation knocking at the door, nor those of a falsity in gesture or a trick in tone. We speak to each other across a torrent, and our voices do not carry; we speak to each other across the conflict of impersonal with personal de-

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sires. And, even when we speak of the same things, we speak in different tongues. For the terms of the old technique are those of effective situation, and the terms of the new are those of sincere characterization. In the old technique, at its worst, there were a "star" and minor parts (varying only in degrees of minority); in the new, at its best, there is only the *ensemble*, the *whole*. In the old, at its worst, everything and everybody was made subservient to the "star"—lines taken away from other players, scenes they played too well cut bodily lest the contrast between the "star's" brilliance and their obscurity be not sufficiently marked, the very spirit of the play changed "to give the star sympathy" or "to fit the star's personality"; to such a degradation had the theatre sunk. In the new, at its best, there are no longer large or small, good or bad, parts: there are parts (of a whole) well-done or ill-done, that is all; and, if there be subservience, it is the subservience of character to character, of parts to a whole, of all to the play. The old technique put a premium on prostitution, the new puts a premium on acting. In such a conflict, the issue is not doubtful.

For it is acting which makes the play live, and "*the play's* the thing," as it always has been, and always will be. Not the "star" any more than the producer or the electrician or the property-man. If any doubted it, this season would have convinced them, had they watched the *audiences* at Lionel Barrymore's *Macbeth* and at Walter Hampden's. For the audience is an integral part of the acted play: it is the hero, and the lover, and the wronged sufferer, and the voice of poetic justice; and, if for an instant it remembers that it is none of these things but Mr. A. out of a job and Miss B. jilted by her beau, then the play has ceased and there are only clattering boards and a cheap-jack. Too few people of the theatre seem to realize how simple the audience is in this, and how lovable,—particularly the New York audience, perhaps the most generous in half a world. I do not know the Russian or the Scandinav-

ian audience, but I know something of the audiences in Italy and France and Germany and England, and never anywhere have I known an audience that brought a simpler or a kinder heart to the theatre than the average audience in New York. Its percentage of know-alls, chatterers, coughers, and superior persons is small and highly unpopular; they listen better than the average audience in any city I have seen; they come like children, utterly ready to believe all that they are told; like children they swallow the good and the bad indiscriminately (no such lamentable matter in a country where ethical lecturers, politicians, and presidents of women's clubs set themselves up as arbiters of art); and, like children, they kick and scream when they are hurt. They were hurt by Mr. Barrymore's *Macbeth*, hurt unforgivably; they had brought their childish love, their faith, their play-instinct, their worship of a great name, to offer in return for a true story; and they were given instead

“a tale

“Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,  
Signifying nothing.”

Of course they kicked and screamed. And since, childlike, they did not know what was hurting them, they vented the rage of their cruelly wronged trust on the first unfamiliar object in sight, Mr. Jones' scenery. It was strange, and therefore an object of suspicion; it was alien from Shakespeare (so, at least, I believe), and, in so far as it was that, it was to be condemned; but the audience would have forgiven—or anyhow forgotten—it, if Mr. Barrymore had repaid their devotion with his own. Mr. Hampden gave them the story they came to hear, and they shuddered with delicious terror and asked for more. Which of us who sat in the Apollo theatre that opening night will ever forget the simple and loving eagerness with which we came—for *we* are that average audience, you and the girl in the candy-store and I—or the deep hurt with which, like unjustly punished children, we slunk away? We had been reminded that, after all, we were only Mr. A. and Miss B.

## LONELY PLACES

And slowly—since the press fails to represent the public, and the critic prostitutes his talent to his trade, and manager and “star” lie and lie to the too-long credulous owners of pockets that begin to grow weary of picking,—slowly the public becomes aware—you and the street-car conductor and I—that the “old-school” manager looks on each of us as a potential gull for plucking, but the “new-school” manager looks on each of us as a possible comrade for a great adventure.

A great adventure. The last fight of all, a fight which has hardly yet begun: the fight for *the play*. That is where the Chicago Little Theatre failed, and where all the artist-groups in America hitherto have failed, except perhaps the Provincetown Players. For the new drama, which *is* “the play,” will not come by revivals of Ibsen or Shaw or St. John Ervine, however well and truly acted, nor by translations from the Hungarian or the Russian, however imaginatively staged. It will come by

“digging, year by year,

In a hill’s heart, now one way, now another”;  
and it will not come in any other fashion. It will come, if it come at all, only by digging without end in the secret and lonely hillsides of our own hearts.

## A FESTIVAL PLAYHOUSE IN THE ALPS

BY HERMAN GEORGE SCHEFFAUER

**M**AX REINHARDT is being drawn, perhaps even driven away from Berlin. The amusement tax that breaks the back of theatrical enterprise, feuds of art and feuds of finance between rival directorships, the feeling that a new generation, bred by the war, rude, full of revolt and a lust for conquest, is pounding at the doors he opened and closed—such are a few of the factors in this move. His last great venture, the Grosses Schauspielhaus in Berlin, has been savagely attacked—notably and brilliantly by Franz Ferdinand Baumgarten in "*Cirkus Reinhardt*". This critic calls it an "intellectualized Luna Park mixed with the shadows of a *danse macabre*," and declares that it is but the old capitalistic theatre in the form of a circus and destructive of all illusion. It must, however, be remembered that this elephantine mass of a show-house with its dull-smouldering red exterior, its leaping and climbing slopes, ridges and crests, and its interior of tunnels, grotts and stalactite vaults,—as it were the bowels of this mountain,—is only an architectural compromise, an architectural phœnix soaring out of the ashes or rather the skeleton of a former circus that arose in turn out of a former market-hall.

It may be that Reinhardt has scented a new world to conquer, that he wishes to remove himself to rarer and purer altitudes of activity than Berlin-after-the-war can offer. His eyes are now directed southward to Salzburg in Austria, one of the most beautiful spots in the world, a romantic landscape composed as by Salvator Rosa in his gentler mood. Here, in the ancient and historic park of the *Schloss* of Hellbrun, Reinhardt sees a new temple of the drama arise, a spacious and noble fabric, a kind of lay cathedral or cathedral organ, quiring amidst the trees,

## A FESTIVAL PLAYHOUSE IN THE ALPS

shining against the snow-clad hills of the Salzkammergut. The thing is as yet only a vision, a project, a committee program, an architect's sketch. Yet it will be born in obedience to the will of the man of action and the desire of the dreamer. And as the expression, as the projection of something for which the soul of Central Europe aches and cries—a refuge, a retreat, a bright tabernacle for the grail of art.

*A Festspielhaus.* Let us divest our minds of the muddy meaning the first two words have acquired in our country, and invest them, as in their original tongue, with a sense of the gravely-joyous, the ceremonial *allegro* of the spirit, of serene and stately delight, of that exaltation of the soul and mind, clarified by the wonders and mysteries of the drama, art and music, revealing themselves against backgrounds of beauty and eternity. If Bayreuth rolls and drones with the spirit of Wagner and a semi-sacerdotal cult and tradition, Salzburg is to chime with the bright and silvery spirit of Mozart, for Salzburg is the city of the master of *The Magic Flute*,—here stands the famous Mozarteum.

The Festspielhaus is to serve man and life; it is to celebrate festivals in their name and in the name of art. Something of the radiance and joy of poetry, art, music, drama, the dance, undefiled by profiteering, by war, by nationalism, is to dwell here, a kind of League of Arts of the world in a world sick to its gorge with the sermons of internationalism, the insolence and cretinism of self-styled Leagues of Nations. The "gay science" of Nietzsche is to have a beautiful playground, if not an altar or temple. An irony harsh enough to wring our withers, a pathos of apparently irreconcilable extremes, rises out of this project. Is it Austria, this paralyzed, axe-amputated state, this stump, this mangled torso with the hydrocephalous head of Vienna, the once-debonair, lolling listlessly in hunger and despair—is it actually Austria who is to set this tiara of stone, this new amphitheatre of music, light and pageantry on her brow? Yes.



## THEATRE ARTS MAGAZINE

The project took its rise as far back as 1916—amidst the ever-present shadows of collapse and dissolution. Possibly some instinct of the salvation, the solace to be found in art was at the root of it, some dim foreboding of the Stygian fate that lowered beyond the battles, even the victorious battles. Will the plays, mysteries, spectacles, masques, oratorios and operas played or presented in the name of the blithe and harmonious Mozart, help to heal up a broken land? Will Reinhardt's wand be able to strike balsam from this Salzburg stone to soothe the wounded breasts of a mutilated people? He who knows the Austrian soul cannot doubt this. But it is not for Austria alone nor for Germany that this great structure is to be erected. It is to be a playhouse for the world, a stage for the hopeful and the affirmative in our age and for that which has remained young and valid through past ages. It is to be a place of pilgrimage and devotion.

"The Salzburg Festspielhaus Community" was founded in August, 1917, and chose this art-anointed spot for the erection of a theatre which was to be free from the tyranny of the box-office, the mere-amusement-mad, the metropolitan mob. An Art Council was appointed to take initial steps—among its members were Hugo von Hoffmansthal, Austria's most distinguished poet, Richard Strauss, the composer, Max Reinhardt, Franz Schalk and Alfred Roller. The site—the southern part of the splendid park belonging to the *Schloss* of Hellbrunn. Soil and place are propitious. For it was here that Bishop Marcus Sittich of Salzburg, an art-loving, life-loving creator and impresario of feats and festivals, built in 1617 the first open-air theatre in Europe—a charming hemicycle of stone in a lonely spot relieved by a romantic and rocky gorge.

Max Reinhardt had already sent out his feelers towards Salzburg, the old city on the Salzach with its wooded hill crowned by the fortress Hohensalzburg, rising from its heart. During the autumn of 1920 he arranged for a monumental production of *Jedermann* (*Everyman*), on the steps and approaches of the cathedral there. Alexander

## A FESTIVAL PLAYHOUSE IN THE ALPS

Moissi, the famous German actor and a picked troupe of players, carried off the old morality with great effect. The setting seemed made for the play, the play for the setting—the bells rang from the steeples, the chanting of the choirs came from within the church. A semi-religious, mediæval air dominated the performance and worked its will upon the large audience which stood thronged in the streets and in the windows of the houses in the Residenzplatz.

Another step has been taken towards the realization of the Salzburg Festspielhaus—a task that is gigantic in the difficulties that must be overcome, as for example, the raising of funds, the agreements with the state, the enormous expense of all building operations. Two eminent architects, Hans Poelzig of Berlin, the creator of the Grosses Schauspielhaus, and Josef Hoffmann of Vienna, have been commissioned to make plans and sketches. Poelzig, a gifted craftsman and creator, at once plunged into this grateful task, brought himself in tune with the dramatic, historical, natural and cultural features of the problem. He has now produced preliminary sketches which are characteristic of his bizarre but fascinating genius.

The plan is to comprise a complex of buildings, a living organism of various parts, co-ordinated and united into a monumental whole. The program of the Salzburger Festspielhaus Community calls for a large festival theatre to seat some 2,000 persons, in addition to which there is to be the smaller Mozart Spielhaus, seating some 800. The two theatres are to be surrounded by workshops, studios, rehearsal halls, terraces, arcades and a restaurant.

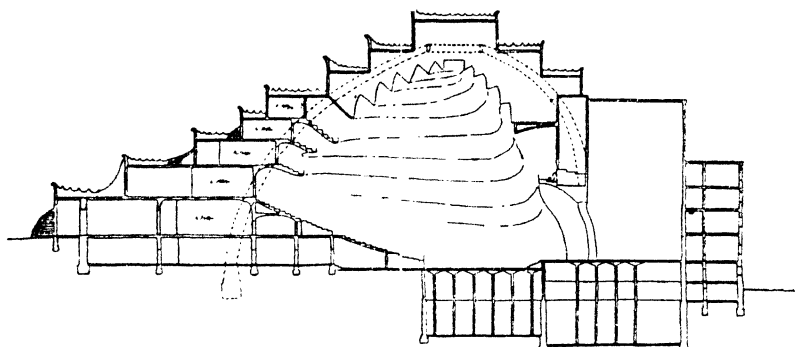
Poelzig at once dug out the aesthetic imperative of this problem. How to interpret the spirit of Mozart—that fluent, light, melodious, Ariel-like grace and dignity into terms of the architectural? A clue, as the art critic Paul Westheim points out, was already given by the Renaissance creation of the old bishop. Another guide-line was given by the configuration of the ground—lawns and tree-dotted glades rhythmically undulant.

## THEATRE ART'S MAGAZINE

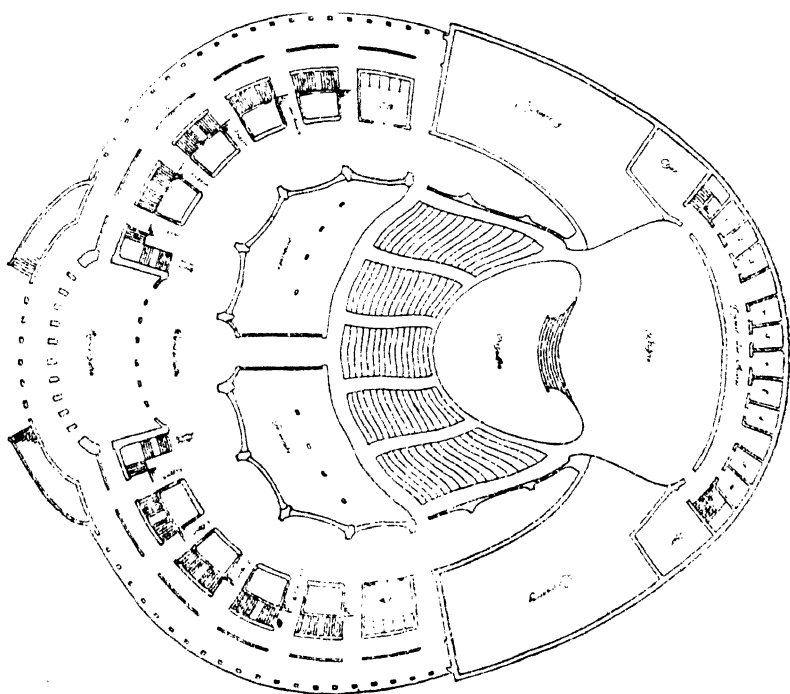
At first glance Poelzig's designs seem to be an off-spring of the rococo of the 18th century—a new rococo whose rocks and shells are no longer decoration, but are aggrandized into frozen masses and monumental forms—a huge, straggling world of crests, finials, pinnacles, arcades, pavilions. The central bulk of the main theatre is a restless, vibrant pile of curving steps, arches, terraces and winding ramparts. This central *massif*, this pyramid of fretted contours, is bound up with the other members of the complex by long arcades. These airy colonnades which curve in the plan, also curve in the elevation, like the track of a "scenic railway," as though to mock the *terrain*. These collonnades will permit the activities of the playhouses and other parts of the structure to go on, unimpeded by rain—with which Salzburg is abundantly blest. The terraces will serve a practical as well as an esthetic and social purpose, for, as at Bayreuth, there will be long pauses, especially during the summer season, during which the spectators will promenade and let the beauty of the environment work upon them.

One feels the movement, the freedom and the music in these preliminary designs of Hans Poelzig's. The plan of the theatre itself determines its developed form, as in all true architecture,—and resembles some gigantic cockle-shell, connected by ganglia with smaller shells or nucleii. The conglomerate stone from quarries in the neighborhood is admirably suited to give the impression of weather-beaten antiquity or homogeneity to the mass—all part of the air or texture for which Poelzig strives.

And yet these tiers upon tiers of crested walls, this dwindling mountain of a building, planted upon an eminence in a park, these sprawling tentacles of corridors, ending in kiosks and pavilions and the bulbous dome of the smaller Mozart Theatre, discreetly detached from its larger fellow, affect us as something Asiatic rather than Mozartian. It is almost as if the Grosses Schauspielhaus had been turned inside out and upside down—the cast, so to speak, of that matrix. It is less *baroque* than it is the *chinoiserie*



Section through the Salzburg Festspielhaus.  
The stage is at the right.



Ground plan of the Festspielhaus. The seats  
continue up in a solid bank above the foyers.

## THEATRE ARTS MAGAZINE

of a semi-mythical China as depicted on the porcelain of the 18th century. We are lost and confounded by an apparent richness of incessantly repeated forms and details, as in an Indian pagoda. And yet this richness is but roughness, as of a sea whipped into innumerable wind-torn billows. The vast expense of labor and material makes simplicity and economy imperative. By the multiplication of the same note, we are buried under an avalanche of impressions incessantly repeated, like a refrain in stone. This impression is undeniably fairy-like, yet the eye misses the line to which it can cling, the surface upon which it can rest.

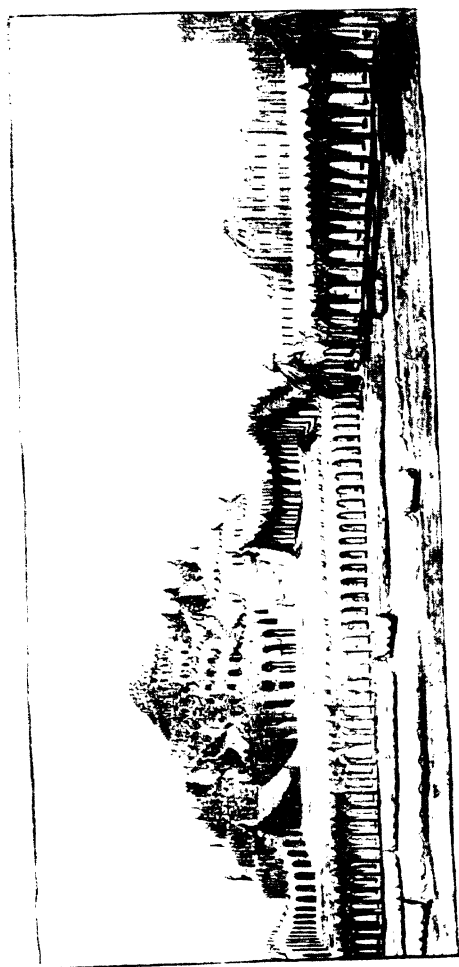
The interior of this bizarre coliseum, so far as mere preliminary sketches permit one to judge, is to be arranged in accordance with all the most modern and scientific principles of stage mechanics, technique and administration. A great organ must necessarily form part of a theatre in which music is to play so prominent a part. Poelzig, this magician-architect, will certainly evolve something amazing and perhaps marvellous out of this central feature of the auditorium, as already suggested in the rude section. The amphitheatrical seats, the floating galleries, flaming, as it were, out of the mouth of this organ, become fixed sinuous lines of projected sound, the whole a blending of plastic music materializing into plastic architecture.

The whole project, as it has crystallized on paper, after its first precipitation from Poelzig's hand and brain, is subject to that endless tireless remodelling and recasting which characterize his work.

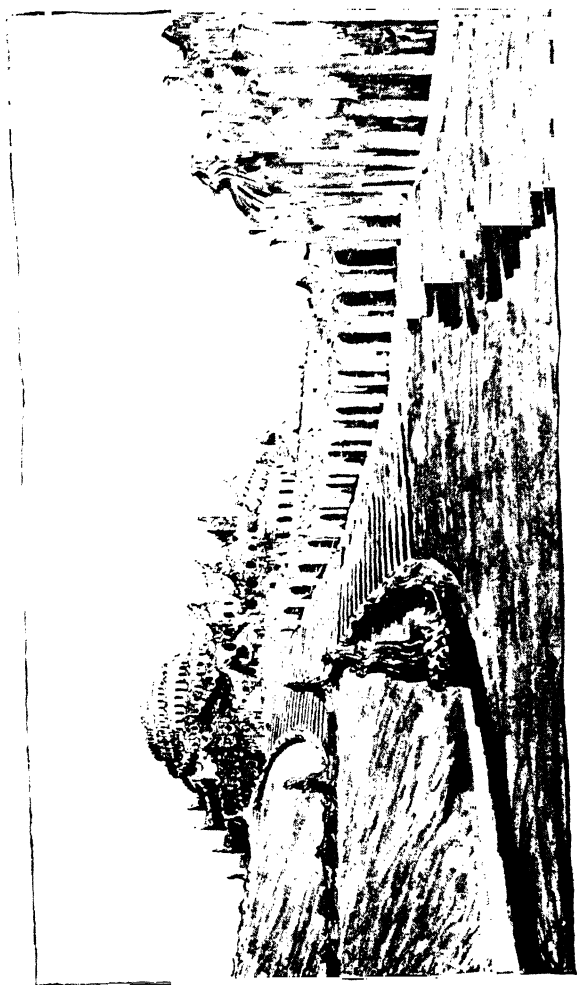
In all this there is a core of immense vitality, the glamour of the creative, the fascination of the fanciful. We have to deal here with new architectural harmonies evolved out of the intuition of a great expressionistic artist, a revolutionary, a transvaluer of values occidental and oriental, one who is working to make a petrified art become fluid once more. His association with Reinhardt is of great significance and may become very fruitful. It follows that if the theatre is to be liberated its architecture must also be liberated. In Germany today we are witnessing the clash



Sketches by Hans Poelzig, designer of Reinhardt's Grosses Schauspielhaus in Berlin, for the festival playhouse to be erected for Reinhardt in Salzburg. The interior, with its extended apron and orchestra floor used by the actors, is here sketched roughly in indication of the rococo style historically associated with Salzburg and the Mozart period. The structure is described in detail in Herman George Schellauer's article on page 210.

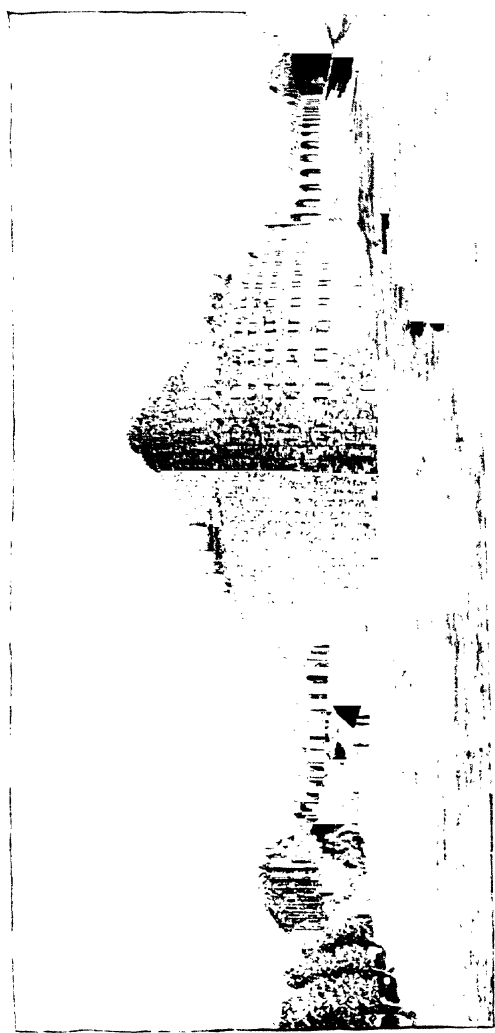


The Salzburg Festspielhaus and subsidiary buildings connected by covered arcades. Note how the patrons of the balconies reach these portions of the house by outside stairways.

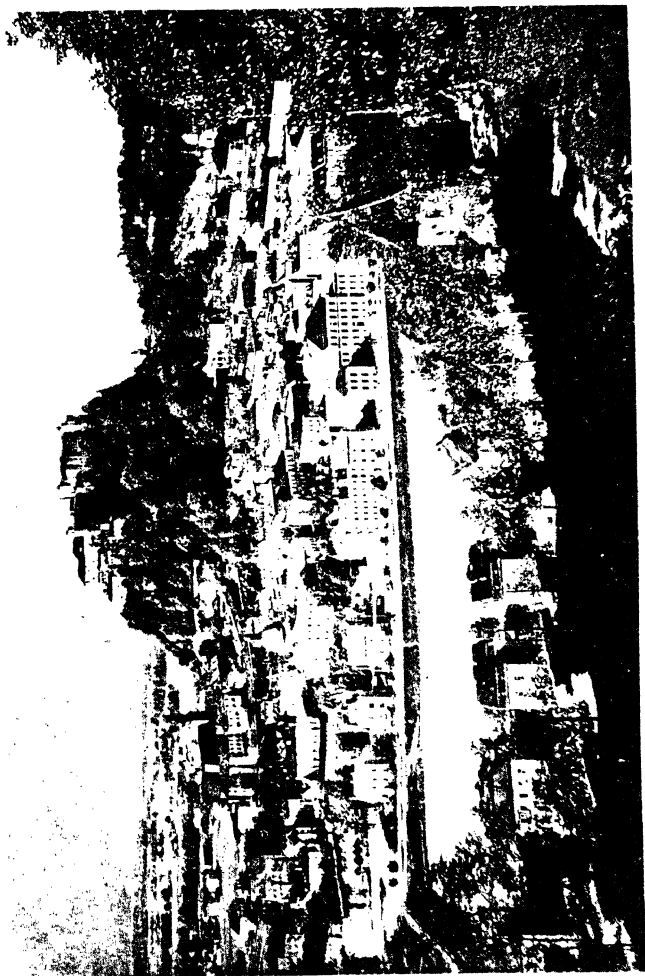


Remhardt's projected Festspielhaus from the side.





Rear view of the gigantic Festspielhaus.



The picturesque town of Salzburg, which will be made a Bayreuth of the new drama through the Festspielhaus of Max Reinhardt, Richard Strauss, and Hugo von Hoffmannstahl.



The outskirts of Salzburg, in the Austrian Alps.  
The Festspielhaus will be erected in the park  
at the centre of the photograph.

## A FESTIVAL PLAYHOUSE IN THE ALPS

of social orders and of new ideas transferred to the realm of the theatre—the battle between the *Rang-theatre* and the *Ring-theatre*—the aristocratic theatre of the tier, and the democratic theatre of the circle.

The *Festspielhaus* at Salzburg, even though as yet no clod of soil be turned for its foundations, will be a milestone in the progress of the modern theatre and modern theatre architecture. If Reinhardt has exhausted one environment, he has found another. In this, aided by some of the dominant creative spirits of our time, and inspired by an atmosphere of adoration, beauty and noble tradition, he may build up something which will be another and greater Oberammergau, a place of pilgrimages which will draw its swarms, not every ten years, but season by season.

The Passion Plays produced here will be born of music, song and beauty, not of agony and renunciation. Religious masterpieces and music will find expression here, yet the spirit of the *Festspielhaus* will be pagan with the paganism of the mellow and radiant Mozart.

This enterprise must also be considered as the flight of a panic-stricken art—blighted by the mordant gases of the war, by the drift towards the abyss of nations sundered like ice-floes, by hunger, hate, by the paper tyranny of bureaucracy and the tribute-taking state—back to Nature. A happy Abbey of Theleme, such as Rabelais dreamed of, is to be reared here for the children of Shakespeare, Mozart, Moliere, Goethe, Beethoven, Grieg, Strauss, for the great Elizabethans, for the modern Irish drama. A monastery and a caravanserai for the priests and pilgrims that make the Flight from Actuality into Art. A kind of fortress, I feel, in which beauty and clarified joy may defend themselves against a world that seems bent upon converting itself into a hospital.

# AMERICAN PRODUCERS

## II. ARTHUR HOPKINS

BY WALTER PRICHARD EATON

I DON'T know just why the editors of the Theatre Arts Magazine have asked me to write this paper about Arthur Hopkins, because he is, comparatively, a newcomer to the theatre, and I am, as I frequently discover, an old timer. When I was going regularly to first nights, here were no Arthur Hopkins productions. It is only during the last decade that his star has risen, and, as a result, there are many of his productions which I have missed. Those critical youngsters who were still playing football when Broadway drove me back to the farm, are the ones who know Hopkins' work from intimate association, and thoroughly. But perhaps, just because my memory does stretch back to the days when *Shore Acres* was a realistic revelation, and the setting for Act I of *Barbara Freitchie* brought salvos of applause, I can hold Hopkins in some perspective, and justify to that degree the strange whim of the editors.

Arthur Hopkins has made, in his brief career in our theatre, twenty-six productions, twenty of which have been entirely his own, the remaining half dozen being accomplished in collaboration with some other manager, or with Nazimova (*The Wild Duck*, *Hedda Gabler*, and *A Doll's House* with this actress, who, of course, had her own conceptions pretty well fixed in advance). Twenty productions are not a great number, hardly more than an average of two a year in this case, and Hopkins' reputation as a producer scarcely rests on all of them, either. There must have been something of rather extraordinary quality to certain of these productions—such a tiny proportion of the hundreds upon hundreds of plays shown on our stage since he first mounted *Steve*—so to have captured public attention and won Hopkins his fame.

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And, of course, this quality can, as is usually the case in such matters, be described by the one word, imagination. It makes little difference to the theatregoers whether the imagination released in a production belongs primarily to the actors, the scenic artist, the stage director; it is the result that concerns them. In the second production Hopkins made, *The Poor Little Rich Girl*, they felt a release of imagination. It was, no doubt, primarily in this case the imagination of the playwright; but it was released in terms of the conventional theatre, and was greatly enjoyed. Hard upon this success came a complete failure, *Evangeline*, a "spectacular" stage version of Longfellow's tale. I rather vaguely recall my own perplexity at this play—vaguely because at that time we all looked at the text, the actors, and thought very little about a possible synthesis of other elements with them into something new and strange. The perplexity was due, of course, to the fact that Hopkins himself had designed the production after some idea at the back of his head of lifting up the proscenium opening and making scenery, in general, do a kind of work it hadn't done before. I fancy his attempt was extremely tentative, and on the whole ineffective; if only I could recall it more clearly! But I am quite sure there was imagination behind it, a *something* trying to break through; and that is why we were perplexed, a little disturbed by the whole affair.

It was not until Granville Barker had allowed the impression to go abroad that he had discovered Robert Edmond Jones—in other words, until he had been shown and had used Jones' setting for *The Man Who Married a Dumb Wife*—that Hopkins found what he had really been looking for, a man who could put into actual form this desire of his own to make the whole stage speak with one voice. *The Devil's Garden* was the first result of the happy partnership. How different an effect was here achieved from anything known to our stage of the previous decades can hardly be understood by the new generation. It was not that useless or encumbering properties were swept

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away, nor that color was employed to correspond with and heighten a mood, though these things played their part. It was that the stage models first, and then the actual compositions formed by the living actors playing out their scenes in the completed sets, were *works of art*, were calculated pictures, with beauty and significance of design, but design significant as drama quite as much as compositions, be it noted—as, for instance, the lone figure in the chair, being accused by a group of figures balanced by a bare gray wall.

Here, of course, it was the imagination of Jones which gave concrete expression to this idea, no doubt. But so far as Hopkins brought together the actors, the designer, the playwright, to make the new synthesis, he can hardly be ignored, nor denied his share of imagination, too.

From the choice of plays he made to follow *The Devil's Garden*, it is sufficiently evident that he sought very little the golden returns reaped by competent mediocrity, but sought, rather, for such opportunities as could be found to keep the pot boiling and at the same time release into the theatre the fresh stimulus of imaginative drama, imaginative settings, a higher and more nearly complete unity of the several arts than our stage had known. *The Happy Ending* and *The Deluge* were alike failures as fuel for the pot, but *Good Gracious Annabelle* and *A Successful Calamity* were both popular successes and works of a new, fresh talent (that of Clare Kummer), set upon the stage with a delicate discernment of their fragility of texture, and an equally delicate discernment of their adaptability to an imaginative pictorial treatment. So to use the long, lank, dusky figure of William Gillette (who had never before in his life acted against pictorial backing), that he became part of a composition instead of the whole picture, was in itself a minor triumph.

It was not Hopkins, but John Williams, who first brought John Barrymore forward as a serious actor, in *Justice*. But it was Hopkins who continued him on his way, in Tolstoi's *Redemption* and in *The Jest* and *Richard III*.

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(That he has now relapsed into the calcium *Clair de Lune* is one of those tragedies of a talent without power of self-criticism.) It took courage to mount any one of these three plays, even with a Barrymore in the cast, or even with two Barrymores; or had one not better say, it took imagination? Courage in the theatre is, after all, nothing at all but the imagination to see potential effects which the dullards cannot vision. *The Jest*, all things considered, perhaps persuaded the general public of Hopkins' quality more than any production he has yet made. I am not competent to speak of it in its original form, and do not know how far, or in what ways, the English version departed from the Italian; but the English version certainly had the sheer theatrical qualities of speed, excitement, spiralling suspense, with the peak of the spiral not attained till the very end of the play. It also had certain romantic qualities, and, still more, it rasped the nerves, and disturbed the senses like a musky odor, but, because it all took place long ago and far away, without elements of unpleasantness. Furthermore, it was extremely well acted. All these things together, however, would not have made *The Jest* the different thing it was felt to be. The quality which the Hopkins production added to the author and the actors (or combined with them, rather), was the quality of beauty, a haunting, heavy, almost oppressive beauty, which most people felt but few analysed.

Again, in *Richard III*, the dominating quality which made this production so vital, in spite of much bad acting, was the quality of beauty; ugly deeds, ugly situations, bloody plots and foul murder, in the past made thrilling by the acting of a Kean, a Booth, a Mansfield, here gained their thrill only in part by the acting of Barrymore. As great, if not greater, share was played by the lights, the design of the setting, the colors of the costumes, the baleful beauty with which the whole action was invested. Without Jones, this would no doubt have been difficult to achieve. But could Jones have achieved it without Hopkins? Behind all was the urgent impulse to create such a production.



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I am not one of those critics who laugh at the second Hopkins try at Shakespeare, the *Macbeth*. It had many glaring weaknesses, chief among them, I think, the choice of Lionel Barrymore to play the title part, and, as a close second, the acting in general, which was far too weak to compete with the tremendous impact of the settings. Acted as it could conceivably be acted, by a company of Irvings and Siddons, with great voices capable of metallic piston strokes, with a genius for invoking the supernatural, the awful, this *Macbeth* could have been made a thing unforgettable. In some ways it was unforgettable as it was presented. I have no desire to go into the theory of the production, nor is that essential. Any producer has a right to his theory, if he can make it good. I suspect that in this case the theory was Jones', and it fired Hopkins' imagination, so that he went the limit with his partner. They didn't quite make it good, not only because the public is not yet ready to accept the scenery of pure mood rather than that of place, and not only because they were working on a play soaked in tradition, but because the human factors they had to deal with failed them (as perhaps they ought to have known would be the case). However, the imaginative quality, the truly tremendous orchestration of form and light and composition, disclosed in this production, acted on the spectator like a new, strange stimulant. It was a glimpse into new worlds, into a possible future, though a glimpse caught painfully for most, as one looks into the glare of a searchlight and then blinks at redoubled darkness.

To sum up what seem at present to be Arthur Hopkins' merits as a producer, as they are disclosed by the best and most characteristic of his productions, one is inclined to say that the most conspicuous merit is a power to take a drama of real value, and so to produce it that it stimulates all the senses, and reaches with its appeal all classes of theatregoers. In productions so different in kind as *Richard III*, and *A Night Lodging* of Gorki or Tolstoi's *Redemption*, Hopkins reached the mass emotions and

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at the same time achieved a new and disturbing beauty even in brute realism, as if the soul of the play were somehow translated into an impression that was not vocal, not visual, not a thing of words or settings or lights or colors or actors' personalities, and yet was all of these things.

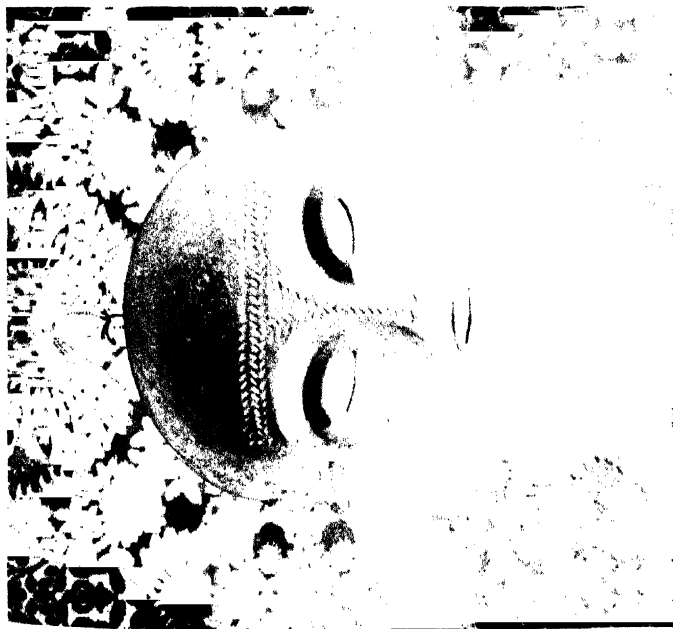
A lesser merit, lesser because it could be the result merely of intelligence, while his chief merit can only be due to imagination, is his choice of plays. In all his twenty-six productions, there has not been a play he has any call to be ashamed of, though obviously *On Trial*, *The Gypsy Trail*, *Little Old New York*,—and two or three more, were merely pot boilers. It is fairly evident from this choice that Hopkins is an artist, that he respects the theatre, that his interest in it is as a place wherein to create effects. To be sure, this is but a negative merit. He is merely what every manager should be—but generally isn't.

To me, his most conspicuous fault is his apparent inability to achieve an acting ensemble commensurate with the imaginative conception he and Jones have so often worked out for the play as a whole. Noticeable in *Richard III*, it was a crying fault in *Macbeth*. But it has also been a fault in plays of lesser consequence, and less daring in design. The new art of the theatre, of which Hopkins is assuredly a disciple, and the most influential, if not the only genuine and sincere disciple among commercial managers, has so far failed conspicuously in devising new plays to fit more closely its new and peculiar needs. Falling back on Shakespeare, it is actually losing as much as it gains, for while it gains a play of imaginative power and majestic poetry, it also has to combat the tremendous dead weight of tradition, the inbred ideas of an audience about that play running in a totally different channel. But the disciples of the new stagecraft have also failed to develop actors who can and will key themselves to a new pitch, to develop acting which synthesizes completely with the new effects. I do not believe such development is impossible, at least to a degree that will match with as much suggestion as the public are likely to relish in stage art for some time to

come. I believe, for instance, that Miss Clare Eames could have been taught to play Lady Macbeth in the Hopkins production with just the metallic glitter and dream-chill and haunted suggestion the scheme demanded. But Mr. Hopkins, hardly less than the non-commercial workers in the same field, does not apparently possess a sufficient knowledge of the art of acting or a sufficient skill as a director of actors, to weld his companies into relatively the same harmony and effectiveness a Belasco or Henry Miller achieves. He is weakest where the whole new art of the theatre is weakest, on the histrionic side.

Mr. Hopkins, of course, in his attitude toward acting, is not one of those managers who observe the attraction of some player's personality, and then exploit it for their mutual profit. His tremendous share in the artistic development of John Barrymore, and his contribution of Ben Ami to our stage, show him as high-minded toward the actor's art, as toward the producer's. What we mean is, that as a director he lacks the power to get from his company an acting effect corresponding to the effect Belasco and Henry Miller get from their players, under the old time methods. To be sure, they are working with players already familiar with the requirements of the old methods of production. Hopkins would have to create in all his company a new consciousness, show them the way to a new technique. His task is immeasurably the harder, and, so far, the present writer cannot but feel, he has very imperfectly accomplished it.

To act Clare Kummer is no more difficult than to act Oscar Wilde, and not greatly different, either. But if Hopkins is going forward away from the traditional bases which, for the most part, in the past, he has rested on, while stimulating his audiences with glimpses of a new beauty, and is going to follow his *Macbeth* into realms of the pure imagination, he will have to find actors exactly as effective, exactly as revolutionary. Of course, he can't find them; they don't exist. He will have to make them. Can he?



Four masks from the exhibition at the Arden Studios. The interesting collection from which these examples are taken vividly re-emphasized the universal appeal of this primitive and eternal effort at dramatic expression. The re-awakening of interest in this fascinating medium was demonstrated in masks by W. T. Bender and Herman Rosse included in the exhibition. At the left is pictured a Central African mask; at the right, a Ceylon mask of carved wood. (Photographs by Francis Bruguière.)



## THE THEATRE WITHOUT A STAGE

BY IRVING PICHEL

**D**URING the past winter the University of California conducted an experiment in repertory with a number of interesting results. After a long career as a booking theatre, leaving its director largely in the position of an impresario, last September and October Professor Hume entered his theatre into the field of independent producers with the trilogy of Shakespeare's Falstaff plays, *Henry IV, Part I*; *Henry IV, Part II*; and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. These productions accomplished two important things for the Greek Theatre. They assembled a group of actors and designers who proved through these productions their ability to play with freshness and spontaneity and to meet the technical problems of the Greek Theatre with an original and ingenious initiative; and, secondly, they created for the Greek Theatre, in the minds of its audience, a standard of production not only higher, but different from the standards of any other performances that had been made there by amateur or undergraduate groups. With the idea of conserving and carrying over the interest of the audience and holding together the group of players and designers, after the Shakespeare plays were done, a production was made in Wheeler Hall of *The Importance of Being Earnest*, late in October.

Wheeler Auditorium is in no sense a theatre. It has a first-rate seating arrangement, but, for stage, nothing more than a rostrum with a curved frontage about the same size and shape as the apron of an old-fashioned stage. There is no proscenium arch, no back stage, no means of lighting in the conventional manner.

Rudolph Schaeffer and Norman Edwards, who had done decoration and costumes for the Shakespeare plays, designed a purely decorative background. Two lighting units, each with two colors, were hung in front of the platform over the heads of the audience. The actors were to take

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their place in the dark, as there was no curtain, and darkness indicated the end of the act.

The experiment was wholly a success from the start. The audience accepted the convention adopted and took a frank interest and delight in its naivete. The first audience was somewhat discouraging in size, but the play was repeated to a slightly larger audience; enough larger to warrant the announcement of a third performance and the undertaking of a new bill, this time of one-act comedies, the performance to coincide with the day of a big football game. The lightness of the bill and the victorious outcome of the game conspired to pack the auditorium. One capacity audience was all that was needed to encourage the directors to undertake a third production and to contemplate a regular season of repertory after the holidays. The third production, *Pillars of Society*, again drew a large audience and, moreover, tested fully for the first time the possibilities of the long, shallow, platform stage. It was something of a technical problem to move fifteen or more characters in so small a space, to group them dramatically and not betray the limitations of the stage. The production was accounted a success. The decorations designed by Messrs. Schaeffer and Edwards showed a new realization of the possibilities of the stage.

The spring season was quickly subscribed and close to one thousand season tickets were sold. It is worthy of note that with a cast of volunteer players and a stage so simple, on which very little money could be expended, single admissions to these performances were sold for fifty cents and season tickets for the season of six productions for only two dollars and fifty cents.

Six productions were made, a new production being introduced into the repertory at fortnightly intervals. Three of the plays were performed twice; the other three, three times each. The plays were Shaw's *Fanny's First Play*, Francis' *Change*, a bill of one-act plays consisting of Lord Dunsany's *Fame and the Poet* and *If Shakespeare Lived Today*, together with Milne's *Wurzel-Flummery*; Susan

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Glaspell's *Bernice*, Shaw's *Pygmalion*, and O'Neill's *Beyond the Horizon*.

Casts for these plays were recruited from the University and the community, without distinction. Some ninety-three players appeared in one hundred ninety-eight speaking parts. During the course of all these performances more than fifty people assisted in other capacities. In spite of the rapidity with which productions were made, it was possible to maintain a certain level of merit in that the plays were acted simply, sincerely and intelligently. The backgrounds by Mr. Schaeffer and Mr. Edwards grew in interest and significance from play to play. But the important outcome of the series was the definite appearance in the audience of an alertness and unity of response, a quick, intelligent and immediate grasping of the intention of the playwright as expressed through the conventions the producers were compelled to adopt. Toward the end of the season it was a commonplace of these performances that a player could come to the edge of the stage, describe what he saw out of the window, and win the complete credence of the audience.

A glance at the repertory listed above shows that comedies were alternated with serious plays. Some grumbling there was to the effect that "there is trouble enough in life without seeing it on the stage." But the majority of the audience has been with the directors in their purpose to present the best plays available regardless of the playwright's view of life.

A series has already been announced for next autumn and in less than a week after the announcement the season subscriptions exceeded those for the present series.

During the summer the players will be held together with productions in the Greek Theatre of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Richard II*, and Sem Benelli's *The Jest*.



# CHARLIE BARRINGER

THE SECOND OF FIVE SKETCHES FROM A COUNTY POOR FARM

BY JOHN JOSEPH MARTIN

*Characters:*

CHARLIE BARRINGER.

PAT McLAUGHLIN.

UNCLE JOE [*The Superintendent*].

SCENE: *It is sunrise on a morning in June. The first rays creep in at the window of Charlie Barringer's and Pat McLaughlin's room, and fall on the faces of the two men as they lie asleep. Suddenly Charlie awakens, and sits up in bed, staring out of the window; then with equal suddenness jumps up, taking every precaution, however, not to wake Pat. Without even waiting to clothe himself, he goes over to the door, stands with his back to the jamb and his heels well in to the wall, and marks with his finger the height of his head. Then, still keeping his finger in position, he wheels about, and stares first at the floor, then at his finger, then at the floor again. He restrains with difficulty an exclamation of joy that rises within him, and looks at Pat to see that he has not awakened him. Pat stirs a bit, but becomes quiet again. It is the sunlight rather than Charlie's almost noiseless activities, that is making Pat restless. Having assured himself that his roommate is still asleep, Charlie stealthily manoeuvres himself into his trousers and shoes and starts for the door. Halfway across the room he is halted by Pat's restlessness, and when he moves onward, in fact when his hand is on the doorknob, Pat wakes, sits up in bed, rubs his eyes, yawns, and looks first at Charlie cowering motionless at the door, then at the empty place in the bed beside him.*

PAT. And where do ye think ye're goin'?

CHARLIE. No w'er's, Pat; go back ta sleep.

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CHARLIE BARRINGER is not really a one-act play. It is a part of a long play divided into incidents which should be both printed and played as a unit.

## CHARLIE BARRINGER

PAT. With the sun shinin' in me face like noonday, and you paradin' aroun' like the clown in the circus? Divil a bit o' sleep a man kin git under thim conditions. What are y' up ta, anny-ways?

CHARLIE [*Who has still not moved*]. I'm jes goin' out for a walk.

PAT. Fer a walk, is it? At this time o' the night?

CHARLIE. 'T's mornin'.

PAT. Well, and if it is? Is that anny excuse fer yer not wearin' enough clothes ta kape the eyes o' the public off yer sleepin' garmints? Come back ta yer bed, man, and act like a sinsible lad.

CHARLIE. I—I can't, Pat; I can't come back today.

PAT. Gad! What's the matter with ye? Ye're actin' like a gurrul of sixteen elopin'. Ye are fer a fact. Come back and let me git me rest before the tiles of a strenious day.

CHARLIE. I've took my rest, Pat. My days o'rest is over. The Lord sent his message and I've gotta answer it.

PAT. God save us, the Lord didn't send ye no message this marnin', did he? I didn't know he wa sich a airly risin' gint.

CHARLIE. Ye're startin' the day bad, a-blasphemmin' the name o' the Lord. The time has come fer the servant o' the Lord ta go an' perform his mission as he was called ta do.

PAT. By this very same Lord ye're wranglin' about, if ye don't tell me what ye're up ta, I'll git out o' this bed and kape ye here till ye do.

CHARLIE. The time has come. Look. [*He searches for the mark of his finger on the door-jamb and proudly points it out to Pat.*]

PAT. Well, what's that?

CHARLIE. My height. The time has come.

PAT. By all the saints in heaven, the time fer what?

CHARLIE. The time fer me ta go forth an' preach the gospel.

PAT. And who would ye be preachin' the gospel to at this hour ' the day?

CHARLIE. The Queen of England.

PAT. Arrah! I'm thinkin' ye'd better be waitin' till after breakfast.

CHARLIE. I can't wait. The Lord tol' me ta go. an' I mus' go.

PAT. And how'll ye be gittin' ta England?

CHARLIE. The Lord will pervide a way.

PAT. Tell me, Charlie, have ye got anny inflooeence with him?

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If ye have, I wish ye'd minton yer ol' friend, Patrick McLaughlin. This manny a year I've been after goin' back ta Ireland ta see me Katie, but yer Lord aint pervided nary a way as I've seen.

CHARLIE. You aint been called ta His service. I hev. The Lord appeared ta me on a cloud o' fire in the heavens, an' He reached down an' teched me on the forehead with His finger, an' He says ta me, "Charlie Barringer," He says, "go forth an' preach the gospel to the Queen of England." An' I answers Him an' says, "Yea, Lord; when shall I go?" An' He says ta me, still keepin' His finger on my fore-head, "When ya become as a little chile." An' He gits back on His cloud o' fire an' floats up inta heaven agin.

PAT. Ye don't say?

CHARLIE. You think I'm crazy. So do they all. But I aint. It's the burnin' o' His finger on my fore-head that makes me talk beyont the unnerstannin' o' the onsaved. It's the inspiration o' the Lord's tech. "Go forth," He says, "becuz ye're saved, an' preach the gospel ta the Queen of England." An' I says, "Yea, Lord; when shall I go?" An' He says, still keepin' His finger on my fore-head, "When ya become as a little chile." The time has come.

PAT. How do ye know?

CHARLIE. Ever' mornin' while you was layin' ther' asleep, I've arose up an' masured maself. Yesterday I reached up ta there; an' the day before I reached up ta there; an' ever' day I got a inch shorter. Today I reached ta here—three foot four. I have become as a little chile.

PAT. Ye're dreamin', man; that's no three foot four.

CHARLIE. Do you plant yerself agin the judgment o' the Lord?

PAT. Not a tall; not a tall, a tall. But look here—[*getting out of bed*] whin I stand up agin the door-post I don't come up to yer mark there even, and my height's a good deal more than anny three foot four.

CHARLIE. You aint one o' God's elect.

PAT. Maybe I be n't—Mother o' Jesus! How high were ye yesterday?

CHARLIE. I reached ta here.

PAT. And the day before?

CHARLIE. I reached ta here.

PAT. And ivery day before ye was a ninch taller?

CHARLIE. A inch ever' day.

PAT. Thin a month ago ye couldn't 'a' come through the door.

## CHARLIE BARRINGER

CHARLIE. You seen me come through the door.

PAT. Ye'r damn right I did.

CHARLIE. Nothin's impossible ta the elect o' the Lord.

PAT. But sufferin' martyrs!—

CHARLIE. I can't wait no longer listenin' ta the wrath o' the unbeliever. I got ta go an' preach the gospel.

PAT. [*Deliberately detaining Charlie until he can get his clothes on*]. Tell me, lad, why are ye goin' ta preach ta the Queen of England?

CHARLIE. The Lord says ta me, "Ther's evil in high places, Charlie. Go an' cast it down. It aint the pore man that causes all the troubles o' the world. It's them as rules in iniquity." That's what He says ta me. "There she sets," He says, "on her throne, an' her hands is idle. It's writ in the Book that the devil finds work fer idle hands ta do. Go an' preach my gospel to her until she sees the sins the devil's puttin' into her hands. There she sets day an' night on her gold throne, doin' nothin'. She's tryin' ta make herself like unta God. And her hands is idle."

PAT. Well, whatta ye want the old lady ta do with her hands?

CHARLIE. Aint they work ta be done? Don't the pore women find work ta do? A-cookin' fer their husban's an' a-sewin' fer their chil'ren?

PAT. But the Queen's got servants ta do that for her.

CHARLIE. What if she has? Aint there alwuz knittin' to be done fer the heathen? She don' hef ta set with idle hands. She's got a husband that aint got idle hands. He's rulin' the people wise an' well, while she sets there on her throne o' gold, doin' nothin'. What joy does he git out o' married life? The Book says, "Wives, be a comfort ta yer husbands." Wher's the comfort of a wife with idle hands? She's a-doin' o' the devil's work.

PAT. [*By this time he has slipped into his trousers and shoes*]. Well, Charlie, me boy, here's luck ta ye a-doin' o' the Lord's. [*He goes quickly out the door. There is the sound of the key being turned in the lock. Charlie stands an instant before he realizes what has happened. Then in desperation he rushes to the door and tries it. He shakes it vigorously, then draws away from it.*]

CHARLIE. O Lord, ya didn' let the Red Sea stan' in the way o' the Chil'ren o' Izril when they was doin' thy biddin'... Ya separated it wave from wave, an' they went through dry. No more will ya let the work o' the ongodly hinder me, thy servant. If ya wanta, ya kin separate this shere door splin'er from splin'er an' let

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thy servant pass. Ya've called me ta a mission, are ya gona let the evil-doers stop me? God A'mighty, come down from yer heavenly home an' open up this shere passage! [*He kicks the door violently.*] Damn be the names o' the wicked as puts obstickles in the way o' the righteous! [*Suddenly he stops and turns to the window. His manner changes.*] I thank thee, O Lord, fer techin' thy servant with thy burnin' finger. His mind is full o' inspiration. [*He goes to the window, throws it open, and starts to climb out. When he is seated a-straddle of the sill, the door opens and Uncle Joe enters hastily, clad in bathrobe and slippers, and followed by Pat.*]

UNCLE JOE. Charlie, where are you goin'?

CHARLIE. The Lord has delivered me out o' the hands o' the wicked.

UNCLE JOE. Don't you think you'd better come inside and tell us about it?

CHARLIE. Don't cha come near me er I'll jump out. My blood 'll be on yer head.

PAT. Best be careful, I'm thinkin', er he will. I've never saw him took so bad.

UNCLE JOE. I'm not comin' near you, Charlie.

CHARLIE. Set down there wer ya can't reach me, er I'll jump an' my blood 'll be on yer head.

[*Uncle Joe sits.*]

UNCLE JOE. Now, come in and tell me where you're goin'.

CHARLIE. I kin tell ya from here. The Lord's call has come. I've become as a little chile an' I've got ta go.

UNCLE JOE. Where?

CHARLIE. Ta preach His gospel ta the Queen of England.

UNCLE JOE. That's funny; the Lord didn't say anything to me about it.

CHARLIE. He on'y speaks ta His elect. What bizness 'd He hev a'talkin' ta you, a evil-doer?

UNCLE JOE. He often talks to me.

CHARLIE. Are you chosen ta preach the gospel, too? [*He withdraws from the window.*]

UNCLE JOE [*To Pat*]. Shut the window. Quick. And stand in front of it.

CHARLIE. Are ya?

UNCLE JOE. No, Charlie; the Lord gave me another mission.

CHARLIE...What is it?

UNCLE JOE. To take care of you.

## CHARLIE BARRINGER

CHARLIE. Did He call me by name?

UNCLE JOE. Yes.

CHARLIE. Did He appear on a cloud o' fire?

UNCLE JOE. Yes.

CHARLIE. What 'd He say ta ya?

UNCLE JOE. He said, "I give Charlie Barringer into your hands. Watch over him."

CHARLIE. Ya're lyin' ta me.

UNCLE JOE. What do you mean?

CHARLIE. When the Lord speaks ta His chosen He calls 'em by name.

UNCLE JOE. Oh, he called me by name.

CHARLIE. Why didn' ya say so?

UNCLE JOE. Oh, I—wasn't repeatin' it all word for word.

CHARLIE. Well, repeat it.

UNCLE JOE. "Uncle Joe," He said, "I give Charlie Barringer into your hands. Watch over him. He is one of my elect and you must keep him out of the hands of the evil-doers."

CHARLIE. Till when?

UNCLE JOE. What?

CHARLIE. Till when? Didn' He say when ya was ta let me go? When I became as a little chile?

UNCLE JOE. Oh, yes, certainly; I forgot that.

CHARLIE. Ya're lyin' ta me! Ya're makin' it all up out o' yer head! [*He turns to the window.*] Don' think I can't git out becuz ya've shut the winda down. I'm the servant o' God! An' I kin devise ways out o' my head becuz the Lord has teched my fore-head with His burnin' finger!

UNCLE JOE. Wait a minute, Charlie; I haven't told you everything yet. The Lord said to me, "The time's comin' when Charlie 'll become as a little child. Then he'll go away to preach the gospel." "When will that be, Lord?" I asked Him. And He said, "I'll let you know ahead of time."

CHARLIE. Did he put His finger on your fore-head?

UNCLE JOE. Yes.

CHARLIE. An' He aint told ja yet that it was time?

UNCLE JOE. No.

CHARLIE. That's funny. Are ya sure He put His burnin' finger on yer fore-head?

UNCLE JOE. Absolutely sure. He said, "This is the baptism of fire."

## THEATRE ARTS MAGAZINE

CHARLIE. He did!

UNCLE JOE. Yes.

CHARLIE. That's funny, too. He never said that ta me.

UNCLE JOE. Didn't He?

CHARLIE. No. I guess you are o' His elect.

UNCLE JOE. I certainly am.

CHARLIE. Uncle Joe, ya'll tell me when He says it's time fer me ta go, won't cha?

UNCLE JOE. Yes.

CHARLIE. Funny how I could 'a' made that mistake.

UNCLE JOE [*To Pat*]. He'll be all right now.

PAT. Who wouldn't after thim lies ye've been tellin' him? Baptism o' fire, is it?

*[Uncle Joe puts his finger to his lips and goes out. Pat seats himself on the edge of the bed and takes off his shoes and his trousers.]*

CHARLIE. 'R' ya goin' back ta bed?

PAT. Yes; and ye couldn't do better than follow me example.

*[He gets into bed and turns over to go to sleep. Charlie sits on the other edge of the bed deliberating, and alternately unlacing his shoes and scratching his head. He glances interestedly at the door-jamb and seems completely puzzled. Finally, with a look at Pat to see that he is not watching, he goes to the door and stands with his back to the jamb, marking his height with his finger as before. He turns and looks at it, seems increaulous, scratches his head, measures himself again, and at last walks to the bed.]*

CHARLIE. Pat, are y' asleep?

PAT. No. What is it?

CHARLIE. I know why I didn't go today. I aint as a little chile. I've growed three inches. Three foot seven.

PAT. Ye don't say!

CHARLIE. Yeah; since this mornin'. Whad da ya reckon could 'a' caused that?

PAT. Can't imagine.

CHARLIE [*suddenly*]. I know! Lookee here. [*Going to the window*]. Sleepin' in the sun makes ever'thin' grow. [*He pulls down the shade*]. I must remember ta keep that there curtain pulled down. [*He gets into bed, pulls the cover over him, and turns over to go to sleep.*]

CURTAIN.

## THEATRE ARTS BOOKSHELF

BACK TO METHUSELAH. By Bernard Shaw. At sixty-five Bernard Shaw has written a drama comparable in certain curious respects with Goethe's *Faust* and Wagner's *Parsifal*. It is the most complete expression of the author's philosophy of life. It takes a Gargantuan form—five component plays each an hour to an hour and a half in length. It is the strange and luxuriant flowering of a dramatist's most mature years. *Back to Methuselah* is one long summing up of those ideas of the Life Force which have played a considerable part in Shaw's dramas from *You Never Can Tell* through *Man and Superman* to *The Showing Up of Blanco Posnet*. The play ranges from Adam and Eve to 31,920 A. D. in pursuit of the thesis that nature has been endlessly experimenting in the evolution of a higher and more perfect form of life. It develops the theory that man can reach such form only through the prolongation of his life to at least three hundred years. The first part of the play, *In the Beginning*, shows the discovery of the idea of reproduction, and then the progressive shortening of life through the ministrations of the sons of Cain. The next portion, *The Gospel of the Brothers Barnabas*, pictures two men of to-day arguing with simulacra of Asquith and Lloyd George that through Creative Evolution, the willing of a variation in type, men and women will begin living three hundred years. The next part is properly called *The Thing Happens*; it passes in the year 2170 and with amusing and imaginative power shows the effect of the discovery that various men and women have secretly been living past the "statutory expectation of life," which is seventy-eight years. *The Tragedy of an Elderly Gentleman* carries us to the Ireland of 3000 A. D., when the British Isles have become "a sacred grove to which statesmen from all over the earth come to consult English sages who speak with the experience of two and a half centuries of life." In the last part, *As Far as Thought Can Reach*, we are in the year 31,920 and an Arcady where birth is accomplished through the egg, children are born adolescent and achieve the maturity of fifty years in four summers. Yet perfection is still unattained, for the body dooms these wise men and women to an inevitable death by accident. The play ends in a speech that may be put beside such of Shaw's rare flights of poetry and mysticism as Caesar's address to the Sphinx and the Lady Mayoress's vision in *Getting Married*. *Back to Methu-*



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*selah* is a play of extraordinary conception, the keenest religious conviction and an expression that is alternately humorous, bizarre and exalted. (New York: Brentano's.)

KING LEAR'S WIFE AND OTHER PLAYS. By Gordon Bottomley. To Stuart Walker is due the credit of introducing Gordon Bottomley to American audiences—through his performance several years ago of *The Crier by Night*. Even before the publication of Mr. Bottomley's plays in this country, there was a growing recognition that his was one of the forces to be reckoned with in that rare union of the arts, which is poetic drama. The present volume includes—besides the title play—*The Crier by Night*, *The Riding to Lithend*, *Midsummer Eve*, *Laodice and Danaë*. There is not one among the plays that has not vision, dramatic quality, characterization and poetry above the average. So it is rather by way of measurement one with another, that one says they are of very uneven merit. They are not modern plays, all of them remake times of legend or of long ago that had a broader sweep than ours; men and women of more heroic stature than ourselves. Yet they never fail to create that sense of truth in both character and situation which is the test of their success as imaginative writing. Easily, the most powerful and important of the plays is *King Lear's Wife*, a strange, compelling tragedy of character with superlative flashes of poetry and dramatic values kept continuously high. In spite of its difficulties, this play would well repay the efforts of presentation, as would also *The Crier by Night*, and *Laodice and Danaë*. In all the plays, there are evident two remarkable qualities of Mr. Bottomley's work. One is a deep understanding and portrayal of the women characters, their minds, hearts and motives; the other is a subjective quality in the writing itself that makes it seem always to come from the deeper consciousness. (Boston: Small, Maynard and Co.)

HE, THE ONE WHO GETS SLAPPED. By Leonid Andreyev. Of all the Russian playwrights, Andreyev is the most attractive to many foreigners because of the definite individual quality and the novel dramatic form of most of his plays. His last drama, which was acted this year by the Jewish Art Theatre in New York, is now available in an adequate if not very idiomatic translation by Gregory Zilboorg. It is a brilliant and tragic satire. Its central figure is a man of learning and culture, an educator, who gives up the shams and sorrows of his life to become a clown in a circus. His game

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is to present himself to the public as a great man, an academician, and to be slapped and abused by the chief clown of the troupe. "The public," in Mr. Zilboorg's words, "laughs, being unaware that this laughter is a mockery at itself, at its culture, at its thought, at its achievement." Against the background of sharply drawn circus figures, humorous, heroic and pathetic, the hero passes on to his death—suicide, after poisoning a young equestrienne to save her from a horrible marriage. As in his other work, Andreyev carries the play forward on two planes—in this case, the realism of the circus life and the philosophic and satiric overtones of his implicit comment. (New York: The Dial Pub. Co.)

PLAYS FOR MERRY ANDREWS. By Alfred Kreymborg. The texture of these plays is gossamer. They are fantastic, whimsical, having been written by the maddest and most elusive of playwrights—and poets. Mr. Kreymborg works always in miniature; but within that range he is a technician of remarkable skill and originality. Whether the theatric effectiveness of his plays translates itself successfully to the printed page is less certain. The curious staccato, the rhythm of broken and repeated phrases, the sense of restricted yet strangely expressive movement, resolve in production into what might almost be termed musical form. But this rhythm is of a quality which at times makes reading difficult. Perhaps they should be read aloud. When Mr. Kreymborg himself reads them, they live almost as they would live in the theatre—a theatre where the director would wield a baton (or a wand), his score the play, his orchestra the players. The characters are toys, or the subdivisions of a personality, or brightly colored people formalized into rhythm-guided marionettes. He makes a pattern of incident and character—touching experience with a kind of irresponsible abandon, with flecks of wit and pointed irony, dexterous and seldom making claim to a significance deeper than his vessel holds. And always, dominating alike material, characters and technique, is his superb feeling for rhythm, particularly for verbal rhythm, based upon an imagination essentially auditory. The new technique of the theatre is the richer for these fantasies, written under such titles as *Vote the New Moon*, *Monday*, *A Lame Minuet*, and *At the Sign of the Thumb and Nose*. Only one, *The Silent Waiter*, seems to have failed in its purpose—and that, in just missing fire, suggests a new path towards a deeper, and for that reason perhaps a more significant irony. Meanwhile these are five plays for Merry Andrews—written by one of themselves. (New York: The Sunwise Turn.)

## THEATRE BOOKSHELF

AGAMEMNON. By Aeschylus. Translated by Gilbert Murray. That he has undertaken to render into English verse this "most obscure of all plays," is in itself a mark of Gilbert Murray's appreciation of the work. This eternally wonderful story of pride and punishment, of "the ancient blinded vengeance and the wrong that amendeth wrong," has by its grandeur as well as by its very difficulties of vocabulary, syntax and style, fascinated translators for centuries. Among those who know Aeschylus in the Greek, Mr. Murray will no doubt find the same violent division of opinion as to whether or not the translation is Aeschylus, that he has found for his translations of Euripides. But after all, translations, especially of the source works of the world, are not intended for those who can travel to the source. And with the *Agamemnon* as with the *Trojan Women*, the *Medea* and their fellows, Mr. Murray has, in his translations, given a fine play a beautiful rendering and has given his readers a sense of the quality of Greek tragedy, at what was perhaps its highest point, imbued with both the religious and the dramatic elements. In comparison with Robert Browning's and Plumptre's translations of the same play, Mr. Murray's has the advantage of a finer simplicity, more color, and a heightened movement. (New York and London: Oxford University Press.)

ONE-ACT PLAYS BY MODERN AUTHORS. Edited by Helen Louise Cohen. For High Schools and Libraries, there has been no better collection of one-act plays among the many that have appeared in the last two years, than the one made by Helen Louise Cohen, including, besides such standard plays as Synge's *Riders to the Sea*, Lord Dunsany's *A Night at an Inn*, Maurice Maeterlinck's *The Intruder*, John Galsworthy's *The Little Man*, and Lady Gregory's *Spreading the News*, newer ones of the quality of Oliphant Down's *The Maker of Dreams*, A. A. Milne's *Wurzel-Flummery*, Harold Brighouse's *Maid of France*, Stark Young's *The Twilight Saint*, Josephine Preston Peabody's *Fortune and Men's Eyes*, and others. Almost all of the plays would act well. Practically all of them read well and are worth a permanent place in a dramatic library. A very good introduction by the editor precedes the text and includes more than the usual information in regard to the organization of little theatre groups and the new tendencies in design, lighting, play writing, play construction and so forth. The illustrations are well chosen, and show some of the best of modern stage designs. (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co.)

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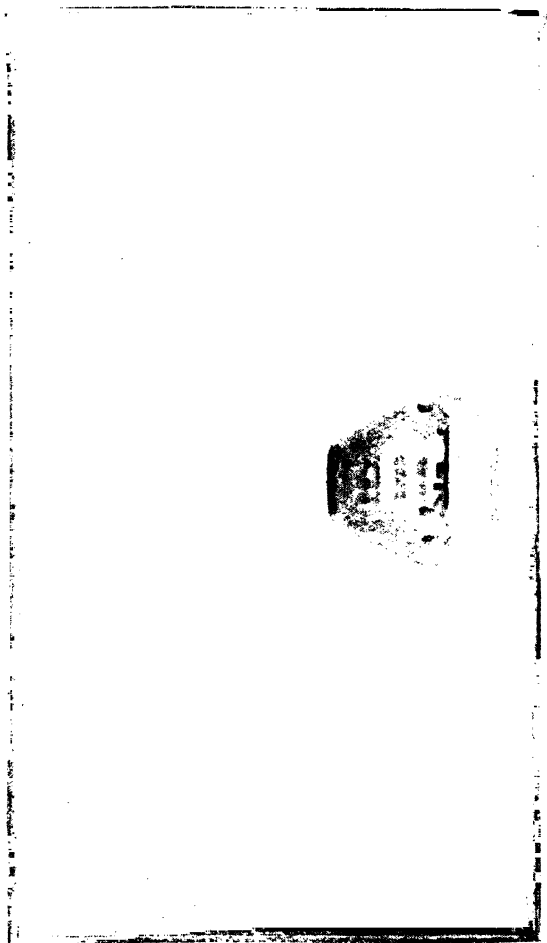
MARY STUART. By John Drinkwater. One awaits the advent of a new play by the author of *Abraham Lincoln* at least with respect and probably with an anticipation of a piece of work done thoughtfully and with beauty of conception and phrase. One is not disappointed with *Mary Stuart*, except that it is too short, for it is but one act. The incident that makes the play is the murder of Riccio, a crucial incident, for it brings together Mary's so different lovers, Riccio, Darnley, and Bothwell. These three seem here much as history presents them; but as for Mary, who can say? Who knows her? Here she is the type of the "grande amoureuse," ever baffled in her loves, ever disappointed, and ever seeking a new source of satisfaction, a many-sided person whom no one man can satisfy. This Mary, too, is a woman whose essential greatness is cabined, cribbed, confined, never to find adequate expression. She is an interesting and impressive conception, but she is too cold; she says that she loves, but she shows no love. She is subtle, suggestive, intriguing, but not seductive. The play is remarkable in its restraint and its delicate lights and shades. The enveloping action, which is modern and fatiguing, is only an unfortunate excrescence. (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Co.)

LITTLE THEATRE CLASSICS, VOLUME III. Adapted and edited by Samuel A. Eliot, Jr. The four plays in this volume are *Bushido* by the Japanese dramatist Izumo—not the version presented by the Washington Square Players but a translation from the French of Doctor Florenz; Peele's *Old Wife's Tale*; *Pericles*; and *The Duchess of Pavy*, adapted from Ford's *Love's Sacrifice*. The first play is incomparably the best, but it is doubtful whether Mr. Eliot's version is preferable to that by M. C. Marcus, published in 1916 as *The Pine Tree*. Though the theatre material in this third volume is perhaps not equal to that in the first and second volumes of the series, the work has been done with the same intelligence and care. The suggestions as to all the phases of production are full and illuminating. All three volumes should be in the library of every Little Theatre. In our eager search for new plays we forget that the past holds a wealth of material, some of which is made available in these volumes edited by a man who not only knows the best of the world's dramatic literature but who is also an experienced producer. (Boston: Little, Brown and Co.)

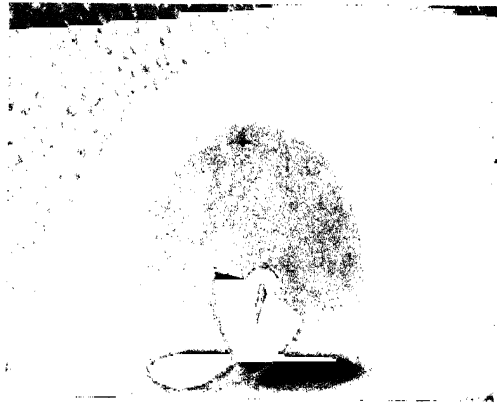
## THEATRE BOOKSHELF

THREE ONE-ACT PLAYS. By Harold Chapin. Among recent writers of short plays few equal Harold Chapin in subtlety and delicacy of characterization and a blending of humor and humanity. The three plays in the present volume have been going the rounds of Little Theatres and have served to give distinction to many an otherwise mediocre bill. *It's the Poor that 'Elps the Poor* is perhaps the author's best play. Though replete with *genre* humor, it has a dramatic force and a bitter tang about it that one has not associated with Chapin's work. *The Autocrat of the Coffee Stall* (first printed in *Theatre Arts Magazine*) is remarkable for its characterization of the old army officer, down and out, who keeps some relic of his former fire and even something of his dignity. *Innocent and Annabel*, a farcical trifle, with an old situation, is delightfully original in characterization. The effect of these plays upon the stage must depend largely upon the acting. To present them adequately is a distinct achievement. (New York: Samuel French.)

THE PROVINCETOWN PLAYS. Edited by George Cram Cook and Frank Shay. If the contents of this volume are disappointing it is only because when one thinks of the Provincetown Playhouse he thinks of Susan Glaspell and Eugene O'Neill, and by so doing sets a standard too high for the average plays of even that remarkable playhouse. The present volume could not well be made up entirely of plays by Miss Glaspell and Mr. O'Neill. Even if we exclude its two most brilliant names, the record of the Provincetown Playhouse in the production of original plays is unique among Little Theatres in America. It has actually in the seven years of its existence done what it set out to do. The present volume includes *Suppressed Desires*, by Susan Glaspell; *Aria da Capo*, by Edna St. Vincent Millay; *Cocaine*, by Pendleton King; *Night*, by James Oppenheim; *The Angel Intrudes*, by Floyd Dell; *Bound East for Cardiff*; by Eugene O'Neill; *The Widow's Veil*, by Alice Rostetter; *Enemies*, by Neith Boyce and Hutchins Hapgood; *The String of the Samisen*, by Rita Wellman; and *Not Smart*, by Wilbur Daniel Steele. The three last are here printed for the first time, but at least two of them are well known to Little Theatres. (Cincinnati: Stewart Kidd Co.)



Design by Rudolph Schaeffer and Norman Edwards for the production of *Change*, the Welsh industrial drama, in an auditorium permitting only a flat backdrop. See page 239.



*Setting for the "Meditation" scene of "Thais," designed by the Russian Arts & Crafts Studios for the South American Opera Co.*

PROFESSOR ROERICH, the distinguished Russian painter and scenic designer, showed his high regard for the artistic quality and historical accuracy of the work of the Russian Arts & Crafts Studios when he entrusted to them the realization of his costume designs for "Snegurochka," the opera by Rimsky-Korsakoff, which he is mounting for the Chicago Opera Company.

The Russian Arts & Crafts Studios offer both the professional and amateur theatre a complete production service. Under the direction of Irving and Nathaniel Eastman, artists trained in the Continental theatres, the Studios undertake the complete artistic supervision of every variety of dramatic entertainment—play, opera, vaudeville act, musical comedy or motion picture. The Studios supply designs for scenery and costumes and manufacture them in their own workshops. They design and construct all properties and arrange all lighting effects.

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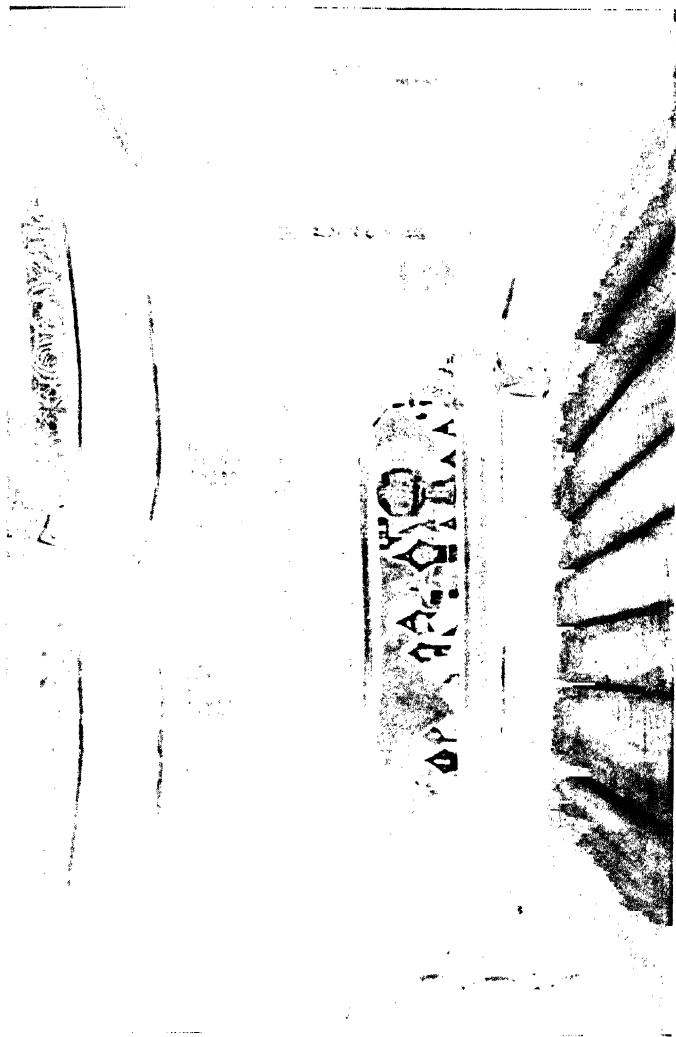
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Nicolas Roerich's design for the tower room in the Russian opera *Prince Igor*. An example of the rugged strength and spiritual vigor of the work of the distinguished Russian artist who has now made America his home. Costume designs for *Saegurochka*, a forthcoming production of the Chicago Opera Company, appear on pages 294-296. An article by Roerich will be found on

## AMERICAN PRODUCERS

### III. DAVID BELASCO

BY JAMES GIBBONS HUNEKER

"DAVID BELASCO presents Mrs. Leslie Carter!" I read no more. The faded playbill on my desk set whirring the subtle mechanism of memory, and presently I was launched on a little excursion into the past. Psychologists tell us that we live forward, think backward; a formula that neatly divides the past from the future; two aspects of one and the same thing. So the old-time announcement that headed this theatre programme served the purpose of liberating from my frozen subconsciousness a cloud of recollections which swarmed like moths about a summer lamp. David Belasco was the lamp, and my memories of him the incessant moths; a mere piece of paper that became as potent as some antique and muttered conjuration whose magic evokes the wraiths of vanished years. I saw, crystal-clear, a young man with raven-black hair, eyes so large and luminous that their iris had no defined color, the thick lashes and eyebrows a color-note for the face; the delicate aquiline nose that seemed less Syrian than Assyrian, and a profile that had something archaic and Eastern. You may see such sharp silhouettes on Babylonian or Egyptian tablets and tombs in the British Museum. Exotic, yes; but the vitality that burned in the eyes of the man and his few, significant gestures revealed an intense concentrated nature, one that could be stopped by nothing short of extinction. And the personality of David Belasco to-day is not a whit altered—if anything it is intensified; not mellowed, because he was born without angles. He is as much a riddle as he was three decades ago. Personality is an eternal enigma.

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*In his art Belasco is clairvoyant. He has been called a wizard, but his wizardry deals with externals; his genuine distinction lies in his ability to comprehend character. At times it amounts to sheer divination. It is his feminine side in operation. Sometimes it slips into mere sentimentality, and his art suffers thereby. And it is also the keystone to his success in training his artists; a sixth sense, that serves him infallibly as an agent of clairvoyance.*

Consider the inevitable current of his career. "I, too, am an actor," he could have said, without parodying Correggio, after he saw Charles Kean. Though the road was obscure, he boldly ventured forth on its tortuous thoroughfares, and whether as clown, bareback rider, peddler, newspaper man, call-boy, "super," actor in small parts, or prompter, he assumed his devious tasks with a vim that singled him out as one of the fore-ordained. No doubt it was a will-o'-the-wisp, this mad pursuit of an impossible ideal, but striving after the highest is the best intellectual gymnastic for a future artist. Nowadays, thanks to the debased ideal of the theatre, the very mention of discipline revolts the soul of the beginner. Where, indeed, are the glorious examples of yesteryear? The only prize to be run for and wrested from an indifferent public is pecuniary success. Let art go hang!

In the days of Belasco's youth the American stage shone like a constellation. There were not only stock companies everywhere, but there were such men and women as Edwin Booth, Charlotte Cushman, Mrs. D. P. Bowers, Mr. and Mrs. John Drew, Barrett, McCullough, Modjeska, Lotta, John T. Raymond, the elder Sothorn (most incomparable of comedians), James A. Herne, Clara Morris, Genevieve Ward, Jeffreys Lewis, E. J. Buckley, Maud Granger, Harry Montague, Frederick Warde, Charles Coghlan, Rose Coghlan, Charles Thorne, F. F. Mackay, the two Western sisters, the lovely Adelaide Neilson—the list might be prolonged for many pages. Young Belasco saw these people at close range. He studied them. He worked with that prodigal of talents, Dion Boucicault. He became ac-

## AMERICAN PRODUCERS: DAVID BELASCÓ

quainted with the classics of the drama. He heard Shakespeare where Shakespeare is best heard—on the stage. He was a student at first hand, and, not having the time, he did not trouble himself about the aesthetics of play-writing, but kept that task for his leisure later years, after he had learned more in the fire of the footlights than the professors of the drama can ever tell him. He has always been catholic in his tastes, always receptive to new influences, never rejecting novelty because it wore a repellent mask, instinctively knowing that practice comes before theory, that creation is the parent of criticism.

Let it be said, and it cannot be said too often: The theatre is the theatre; and if this is a platitude, then engrave it on your memory, for it is a golden platitude. In derision as well as sorrow, some Frenchman said that over the portal of every playhouse should be inscribed this legend: All Reality abandon, ye who enter here! Precisely. Though it was meant in a subversive sense, this warning embodies the first law and last of the theatre. It must not be real, for reality is a slayer of illusion. It may be divorced from life, divorced from literature, yet remain invincibly itself. The frame is quite rigid. There it is, that bald, cold, empty space which during the traffic of two hours you must fill with what seems like life, else fall by the wayside with those who cannot unravel the secret of the Sphinx. It is all so inviting, so hospitable to every form of literary talent; but the laws of the Medes and Persians were not more immutable than are the drastic limitations of the theatre. Zola went further when he declared: The theatre of the future will be naturalistic or it will be nothing. It is not yet and never will be naturalistic. You may reel off at the tip of your tongue the Three Unities and the Thirty-six Situations, but the knowledge of these and a thousand axioms besides cannot make of a sow's ear a silken purse. "How to Write a Play" lectures have never taught any one the art of play-making.

As a stage director he always achieved success. There was no disputing his mastery of his material. Years of

adapting, rewriting, translating, had endowed him, coupled with his enormous experience, with swiftness in attacking any problem that presented itself and an inevitable tact in the handling of his forces. The principal reason why he has been successful in his fashioning of raw material is that, apart from his technical training, he is an untiring student of human nature. The procrustean theory of training he discards. That way lies the arbitrary, the machine-made. He, if I may be allowed a slight exaggeration, fits his play to his actors. This simply means that he studies the instrument from the keys of which he extorts music. No two humans are alike. Belasco spies on souls. He makes his inferences; sometimes he goes on a wrong tack; not, however, often. He finds what he wants. A touch or two and the organism plays its own tune. He literally educes from his woman or man what is already in both of them. When he encounters a great natural mimetic gift like David Warfield's, he is happy. A hint to such an intelligence suffices. With lesser people he seldom fails, for he varies his procedure with each person.

My personal belief is that he hypnotizes his players—let us call it that for want of a better word—else how account for the many instances of actors and actresses who won success, artistic and otherwise, and have faded into mediocrity when they passed from under his personal domination? I know this has a Svengali flavor, but I am willing to let the statement stand for what it is worth—that under the intellectual supervision of this keen critic artists give out what is best in them. This much may be said without fear of contradiction: There is no precise Belasco method, no particular school; no actor or actress has ever lost his or her individuality; rather has that individuality been accentuated and defined. Mrs. Carter's case is a signal instance, as well as that of Blanche Bates. I have sat through rehearsals at the Belasco Theatre when a full-dress rehearsal was as long and torturesome as an initial rehearsal. I have seen this impresario of accents, gestures, and attitudes go through an entire night, till morn-

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ing found his guests pallid, nervous, irritable, while he was as fresh as his company; his enthusiasm kept every one vital, every one save the curious students in the stalls. David Belasco is the last of that old line of stage-managers who teaches by personal precept. And I don't mind telling you that I suspect there is concealed in him somewhere an autocrat.

I once wrote of him that if Richard Wagner had collaborated with him in stage management it would have been to the lasting benefit of Bayreuth. The first garish school of stage decoration was an ugly dissonance in Wagner's attempt at a synthesis of the seven arts. Primarily David Belasco is a painter. He wields a big brush and paints broadly, but he can produce miniature effects; effects that charm, atmospheric effects. Nothing so exotically beautiful has ever been shown as the *décor* of *The Darling of the Gods*. Never mind the verisimilitude of the story. The scenic surroundings were more Japanese than the play itself—an attenuated echo of Pierre Loti's exquisite *Madame Chrysanthème*. But the stage was a marvel of evocation. *The River of Souls* brought into the theatre a vision almost as mystical and melancholy as a page from Dante's "Inferno." Truly a moving picture. A proof before all letters! One that since has been paraded abroad as a triumphant discovery of the New Art. In all the theatres I visited at London and on the Continent I saw nothing that had not been forestalled by the genius of Belasco; not the startling lighting effects of Gordon Craig, nor the atmospheric innovations of Reinhardt, nor the resonant decorations of Bakst, were novel to me, for I had watched the experiments at the several Belasco theatres, had heard the discoverer himself discourse his theme.

His fastidious taste in music he demonstrated by abolishing music during the *entr'actes*. The double-stage, an invention of the fertile Steele Mackaye, anticipated the Munich revolving stage by years, and was utilized by Belasco when at the Madison Square Theatre. But credit for his innumerable devices, artistic and mechanical, has

## THEATRE ARTS MAGAZINE

yet to be given him in many quarters; though the tendency to over-emphasize his abilities as a manager at the expense of his dramatic triumphs is deplorable. Mr. Belasco is not a theatrical upholsterer. He is more interested in the play than its setting. That he provides an adequate frame for his picture testifies to his disinterested love of perfection. If a period is to be illustrated, he illustrates it. The exact *milieu* is his motto. The sumptuous Du Barry epoch, the gorgeous exoticism of the Japanese, the American interiors in *The Easiest Way*, the austere simplicity of *Marie Odile*—four walls, a table, a few chairs, an image of the Madonna, a painting, two or three pigeons, and a small cast—to mention a few of his productions, testify to his sense of the eternal fitness of atmosphere. Nothing ever smacked of certain American scenes more than *The Girl I Left Behind Me*, *The Heart of Maryland*, *Peter Grimm*, or *The Music Master*.

His art has grown in *finesse*. He has become more impressionistic. He suggests, rather than states. The contemporary stage, thanks to the rather bleak decorative scheme of Ibsen and his followers, has become simpler in accessories. Despite the color extravagances of the Russian Ballet, the furnishings of the drama are more sober than, say, a decade ago. The picture itself has become simplified; formerly one couldn't see the forest because of the trees therein or follow the piece because of its *mise-en-scène*. I have watched plays in fear and trembling because of the cart-loads of things on the stage, among which the actors painfully threaded their way. And that, too, was a passing fashion. Everything changes in the theatre except the theatre itself. George Moore in a recent preface tells a story about Granville Barker. That ingenious manager, actor, and playwright was explaining to a friend the "mentality of his characters" in a projected play of his, when he was thus interrupted: "Get on with the story; it's the story that counts." In this anecdote is compressed the wisdom of ages as seen through the spectacles of practical Mr. Everyman. For David Belasco the story's the thing.

## AMERICAN PRODUCERS: DAVID BELASCO

He has written and collaborated in the writing of many plays. He has had his failures. I recall his *Younger Son*, an adaptation from the German, put on, if I remember right, at the Empire Theatre. Something went wrong, though it had several fine episodes. The adapter was implacable; he it was who insisted that the piece be taken off. He was always his sternest critic. For nowadays this play would be a masterpiece. I remember, too, *La Belle Russe*. It was merely sensational in the violent style of its day, and Gallic to the core. However, this is not a record of Mr. Belasco's achievements as a dramatist. He fought hard for recognition and won his way slowly and not ungrudgingly. In his naïve and candid autobiography you may read the unique record of his climb to fortune. He is not without a touch of mysticism; was there ever any one connected with the theatre who was altogether free from his harmless superstitions? He believes in his star. Why not? It has hung there on the firmament of his consciousness since he can remember. He won't admit the fact that he hung it himself. But there it is. And, call it his ideal or what you will, he has followed this glowing symbol from the wilderness into the promised land. Nor has it ceased to shine for him. He is as full of artistic projects as he was forty years ago. Happy man to grow younger in his heart though his head is gray! To-day the vivid-appearing young man of the late eighties looks like a French abbé in some courtly scene by a pastelist of the eighteenth century. His smile has the benevolent irony of a nature that will never become cynical.

During our walks and talks in those far-away nights I often quizzed him about the Moderns. At that time, instead of writing books about Ibsen and Hauptmann, Maeterlinck and Becque, I was working in the critical trenches, throwing bombs at the uncritical old guard, which would die rather than surrender the privilege of calling Ibsen and the new dramatists "immoral, stupid, cynical, inexperienced." Well, David Belasco knew all these revolutionists; he still reads them, as his library shelves show. He knows



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more about the practical side of Ibsen (for he admires the great Norwegian's supreme mastery of dramatic technique) than do his own faultfinders among the so-called amateur pocket playhouses. We discussed the entire movement—now a matter of history—till sometimes we were hoarse. The truth in the matter is this: David Belasco was literally born and bred in the great dramatic traditions of the golden age. Shakespeare is his god. Then the romantic French theatre. And little wonder. Sentiments more than ideas are the pabulum of his plays. He is unafraid of old conventions. He is an abnormally normal man. The New Movement is less a dramatic revolution than a filtration of modern motives into the theatre. The Ibsen technique dates back to the inexhaustible Scribe; while the Norwegian leans heavily in the matter of the thesis play on Dumas *filis*. Characterization is his trump card.

Now, problems of a certain sort do not intrigue the fancy of Mr. Belasco. He dislikes the pulpit in the theatre. While he willingly admits that in the domain of drama there are many mansions, he is principally interested in what the psychologists call the primary emotions; the setting is of secondary interest. A piece full of black class hatred and lust, like the extraordinary *Miss Julia* of Strindberg, does not appeal to his sensibilities. Why? Question of temperament. Its "modernity" has nothing to do with the matter. It is, with all its shuddering power, too frank, too brutal, for him. He demands the consoling veils of illusion to cover the nakedness of the human soul. If a man loves the classic English school of portraiture and landscape, the suave mellow tones of Sir Joshua Reynolds, the fragile grace and delicious melting hues of Gainsborough, the humid glory of the clouds in a Constable country scene, shall we quarrel with him for not preferring Manet or Degas? Mr. Belasco admires Ibsen, and he appreciates the skill and sincerity of Degas and Manet. But he sticks to his Reynolds and Constable and Gainsborough. Other days, other ways.

He has said: "The true realism is not to reproduce

## AMERICAN PRODUCERS: DAVID BELASCO

material things; . . . it is to reproduce the realities of inner life." The theatre, despite its obvious exteriority, has its inner life. I don't think that Mr. Belasco has cared to explore certain crannies of that "inner life," because the dwellers on the threshold are rather disquieting to behold. Ibsen still speaks in an unknown tongue to the majority. This is not an apology, but an explanation. For me the popular play of the day is no better, no worse, than it was years ago. It is for public consumption, and in the theatre we Americans like to sip sweets, not to think. In the meantime let us rejoice in the possession of Belasco's rare artistic personality. for he has done so much for our native theatre.

Some months ago a manuscript of this article came to the attention of Theatre Arts. It took the editors only a few hours to know that it was exactly the article to represent Mr. Belasco in the *American Producers* series, but even that was too long a time, for *The Outlook* had already secured it. It is through the courtesy of *The Outlook* that we are permitted to reprint it here. Lack of space has required us to omit the very interesting personal history of Mr. Belasco with which the article opened. Mr. Huneker gives Mr. Belasco only general credit for some of the special pioneering he did in production years ago, before there was a new movement to spur him on, omitting footlights, borders, etc. He does give, however, more clearly than any man of younger acquaintance could—a sense of what that dominating quality has been which has enabled Mr. Belasco to do more with given material—human or mechanical—than almost any man of his generation; what it has been, in other words, that has made him, from first to last, a successful producer.

## ART AND BUSINESS

### A RECORD OF THE THEATRE GUILD, INC.

BY THERESA HELBURN

I ADMIT that my title is paradoxical. I admit that art and business, strictly speaking, are incompatible; that any marriage between the two results in innumerable compromises. Pure art is an inevitable celibate. It is therefore somewhat to be doubted whether there is any place for it in an organization as synthetic as the theatre.

It has been my privilege to be connected with what we call without pretence "an art theatre;" an art theatre which, while it started in the traditional poverty and humility, has now to bear up under the stigma of success. I have been asked to explain this success, for it is undoubtedly rare. I feel I must also justify it.

Let me then frankly confess that we are none of us posing as pure artists in the theatre. We know we cannot pretend to the experimental, individualistic, absolutely aristocratic position of the artist for whom nothing exists but his art. For us there are many other things to be considered—good acting, good producing, important things like an audience, trivial things like salaries, rents and union labor.

We found the theatre frankly commercial. We found in the commercial theatre a few beautiful and worth-while efforts, but very few. We found experimental theatres, small, uncertain, of primitive execution, of limited appeal, as all such enterprises must be—and, of supreme importance. We said to ourselves: there is a place for things that are sincere and beautiful in the theatre, a place wider than the experimental theatres can fill, a place less wide than the commercial theatre, even if it wanted to, could afford to occupy—that is our niche.

We had no capital save enthusiasm and faith, but we had plenty of that. We found actors and producers and artists

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who also had plenty of it. It is significant that whenever anyone raises a banner marked "Art," that a crowd—and a crowd of artists—collects almost immediately around it. We secured a small, rather out-of-the-way playhouse, on generous terms owing to the faith of a patron of the Arts,—a faith which seems to have survived innumerable disillusion— and we started out, luckily, with a failure. A very colorful, creditable, artistic performance of a quite charming, but not very human play, *The Bonds of Interest*. It ran—from necessity—three weeks, and steadily lost money . . . the money we did not have. But there is nothing so helpful to the beginnings of an art theatre as a failure, nothing so difficult to withstand as a success.

The failure of our first play tested the faith of everyone implicated; and did not find it wanting. With undiminished enthusiasm we put on our second play. We put it on in the face of the disapproval, almost the ridicule, of the wiseacres, for it was a genre tragedy, and we had already reached the last of May—the season of bedroom farce and musical comedy. The surprising success of *John Ferguson* is well known. It was more than a surprise to us, it was the convincing miracle. It showed us that our faith was justified, our faith in the existence of an audience eager for the kind of fare we wanted to offer. But let me say here that success in the terms of The Theatre Guild did not mean success in the terms of the commercial theatre, and it does not now. It is easy to forget that there are grades in success; that a successful year for a writer of text books does not mean a successful year for Robert W. Chambers. But *John Ferguson* ran all summer, and accumulated enough money for us to start the next season.

To start only, not to run through the season. Only two failures would suffice to wipe out the little capital we had accumulated. They did. The two failures were Masefield's *The Faithful* and *The Rise of Silas Lapham*. They left us dangerously ill, financially speaking. *The Power of Darkness* sustained us through the crisis; *Jane Clegg* pulled us through—another success, but again in terms of an art

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and not a commercial theatre. This play and the steady growth of our public enabled us to open our third season—a season which was to hold three successes, *Heartbreak House*, *Mr. Pim Passes By*, and *Liliom*. They have secured for us a solidity, not only of capital but of position in the eyes of the theatrical and theatre-going world.

It is not mere accident that this, our third season, has been our most successful. In the first place we have profited by our experience; we have come to understand our audience, we have gained in ability. From a chaotic group of enthusiasts, we have grown into an efficiently organized and smoothly functioning enterprise. There is danger as well as benefit in this. As long as we are conscious of this danger, however, we may be safe.

We have had three main problems to solve. First and most important, the selection of plays; second, the securing of first-rate actors, producers, and artists; third, the reaching and holding of the right audience for the sort of plays we wish to produce. These are the basic problems of any art theatre. We are in process of solving them on the principle of co-operation.

The Guild is a group organization. It is run by a Board of Managers, and while there is one executive, none is supreme. All matters of policy are submitted to the Board as a whole, also the choice of plays. The Board is made up of a group of very diverse people, who, while they are all keenly interested in the theatre, are not all *of* it. On it at present are a banker, a lawyer, an actress, an artist, a producer, and a playwright. Their personalities and attitudes to life vary widely—also their opinion of plays. They represent an audience in miniature. When I explain that the choice of a play depends on the majority vote of this group, you will see how we have had to solve our first problem and make our first compromise. The plays we produce are not necessarily those nearest the hearts of us all. Undoubtedly some of us cherish unavailing passions for plays that never see the light of day (at our hand at least). As individuals, God knows what extreme and wonderful things, what

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superb failures or undreamed of successes we might stage, but as a group we generally approximate in miniature the taste of the public we exist for, not the public of the commercial theatre, of claptrap farce, of melodrama, of comic opera, but the public that wants reality, sincerity and beauty—the only public we are trying to reach.

It is, I think, for this reason that the proportion of our successes to our failures is so far above that of the commercial manager. Broadway counts one success to four or five failures. We must have two successes out of five. This year we have had three. We are glad to receive suggestions for plays from everyone in the organization, but the ultimate choice rests with the Board. For obvious reasons, it is not wise to have the acting element too strongly represented in the choice. It is humanly impossible for the actor entirely to separate the play and the part.

The co-operation of the actor, however, is essential. We can not compete with Broadway salaries. We can offer our actors only a minimum salary and a percentage of the profits, if there are profits. He risks getting very little if we have a failure, but he may earn quite a tolerable sum if we have a success. He is assured against any real loss, however, and he is assured, if he is a member of our regular company, of permanent employment in New York City, and of several cosmopolitan openings, with the attendant publicity, which is quite as valuable as money to an actor. But more important perhaps than the actor's willingness to share our gamble is his interest in the sort of play we are trying to produce. Only those who have worked in the commercial theatre can know the misery of putting on a play with actors who are not really interested in the play itself, who are selling their names and services\* for the salary alone. Only those who know the difficult task of putting on plays such as ours—plays that demand the utmost finish and reality of production, in four short weeks of rehearsal, when every actor rehearsing is also playing eight performances a week, and opening cold in New York without any try-out on the road, before the most intelligent, sophisticated and fastidious au-

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dience in New York City—can appreciate what the enthusiastic co-operation of the actor, his genuine interest in the play itself, and the idea for which the Guild stands, can mean. Without it, our work would be impossible. The eagerness of actors, both established and unestablished, who want to be with us, shows how dear to their hearts is the idea of our organization.

But finally, there is the problem of the audience. Ours is not necessarily a small audience, but it is a special one. It includes, as I have said, everyone who likes the genuine article in the theatre and not the specious. It is the public that buys Edith Wharton and Bernard Shaw rather than Ethel M. Dell or Robert Hichens. A public large enough not to worry about, you may say. Quite so, but the difficulty is to get them all together in time. A novel may percolate slowly to its public, starting with a small sale and gathering momentum as time goes on. A play must get its right audience all together under one roof at 8:30 of the evening of its first week. It cannot afford to wait, especially in an art theatre which has no capital to waste on "nursing" a play.

To make our first appeal reach the right audience, we have established a subscribing membership. Subscribing members are not patrons, they are just season ticket holders who pledge their interest in our work, by taking in advance tickets for all the productions of the season. There are no membership dues; on the contrary, in return for this pledge of faith, we sell our season tickets at reduced rates and with special privileges attached. That the scheme suits the subscribers as well as the Guild is attested by the growth of their number. Before our first season, we had found 135 people brave enough to risk \$5.00 on the two plays we promised. Before our second season, we had 500 subscribers for the five plays scheduled. Last year we sold 1,500 season tickets before our curtain went up on our first bill, and this year it looks as if 3,000 names will be on our books before the first night of our first play. At the present writing, we have announced for the coming season an American

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play *Ambush* by Arthur Richman, a revival of *The Devil's Disciple*, a production of *Romeo and Juliet*, Claudel's mystic drama *The Tidings Brought to Mary*, and a new St. John Ervine play. The production of Shaw's *Back to Methuselah* will not, of course, be included in our regular season, but our subscribers will be the first privileged to secure seats. While the money of our subscribers is classed as a liability rather than an asset, it stands to us for the only endowment we have ever had or really want—an endowment that carries with it no traditional control, no influence, no red tape; an endowment that means an interested and sympathetic audience, ready to receive and judge our productions with intelligent interest.

This membership serves another purpose. It enables us to give one purely experimental performance a year. While our five bills are chosen on their merits alone, these merits we feel, must have a wide enough popular appeal to promise a four weeks' run, for it takes us four weeks at least to produce our next bill, and we can not afford to have the theatre idle. This appeal can scarcely be called popular from the point of view of Broadway, which demands a three months run as a minimum; but from the individualistic, aristocratic point of view of pure art which I have already hinted at, the need of an audience of, shall we say, 20,000 souls may seem an extreme demand. So each year, we choose a play which shall be independent of this need. We put it on for one performance only for our subscribers alone. It is "the least good seller" of the theatre. It may be as individualistic, as aristocratic, as experimental as we care to have it. It is our annual fling.

I doubt whether any endowed art theatre that could afford any number of these flings would keep sufficient contact with humanity and reality to survive, for, after all, the drama is a popular form. It is a hybrid art. It is a collaboration between the creator and the interpreter, between artist and artisan, between reality and imitation—which brings me back to the question I am trying to avoid—Is there a place for pure art in the theatre? I refuse to an-



swer the question, but I do affirm that there is a place for purer art than the commercial theatre gives us or can give us, for sincerity of intention and execution, for beauty and reality. This is what the Theatre Guild is trying to offer—good plays for their own sake.

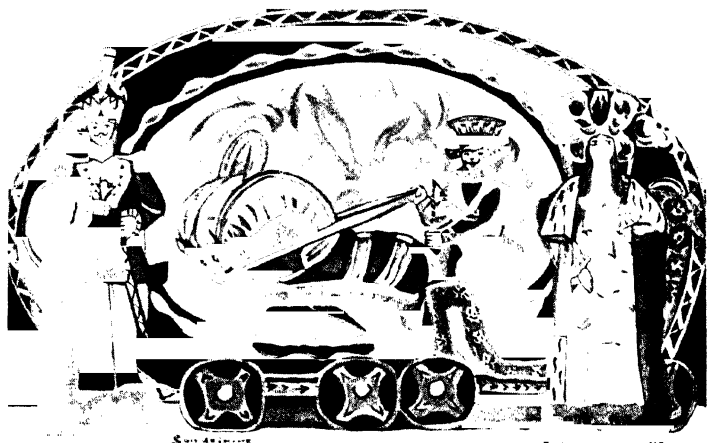
The Guild is not run for private profit. After rent, royalties, salaries, and reasonable commissions to the actors are paid, the profits go back into the organization to stabilize it and make it secure, if anything in the theatre can be secure. We are not on easy street. We probably never will be, and we do not really want to be. What we want is the general recognition of the theatre-going public, the consciousness that there is a Theatre Guild, that it is constantly producing, and that whatever it produces is worth seeing. We are glad to welcome other organizations with aims similar to ours, either in our own or other cities, for it is only by having plenty of good dramatic fare that the public at large will come to appreciate it, and to discriminate between the good and the bad.

It is something of a national disgrace that America has only one Art Theatre, by which I mean a non-commercial professional organization with a theatre building, an organization, such as ours, which in spite of the recognized distinction of many of the people connected with it, is still a small enterprise primitively housed at the old Garrick Theatre "way down" on Thirty-Fifth Street.

But we have hopes.



On this and succeeding pages the *Theatre Arts* presents the super-cabaret of Moscow, *The Bat*, founded in 1908 by Nikita Balieff, described by Oliver M. Sayler a year ago in his *Russian Theatre under the Revolution*, transported to Paris last season with great artistic and financial success and likely to be seen in New York before the year is out. The above, is a design by Sudeykin for *Trepak*.

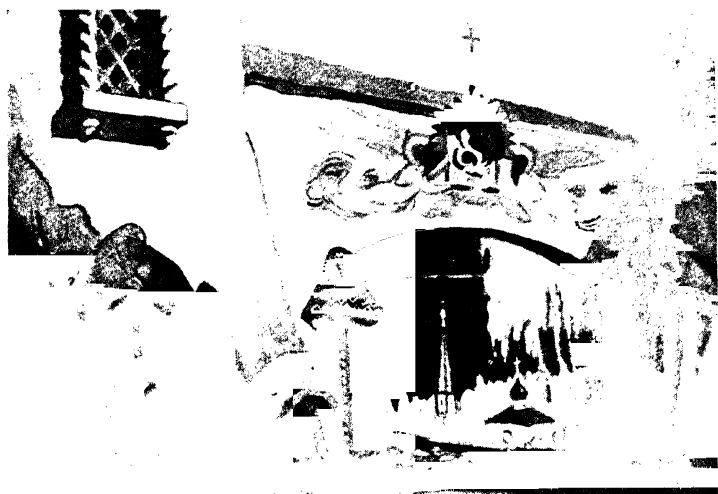


Design by Remisoff for *The King Orders the Drums to Sound*.

## THE BAT

NIKITA BALIEFF'S "Théâtre de la Chauve-Souris," which is now housed in the Théâtre Femina in Paris, was one of the artistic curiosities of Moscow. Born of the Art Theatre it was at first merely a club, a *théâtre intime*, where after the performances of the Art Theatre the actors and their friends met for relaxation and entertainment. The fame of this club grew in proportion to its inaccessibility and after much argument and clamor its doors were opened to the public. As Mr. Balieff says, "It became necessary to tear down the wall of China that protected this inner circle of art and to open the doors of its offerings to all."

The entrance of the public did not in the least modify the theatre's fundamental character. Through all its success both in Russia and in France "The Bat" has remained the theatre of cheer and good humor where a condensed rigid technique is united with a precise and vigorous colorization; where rare taste is brought to the highest point of refinement and piquancy. It is a theatre of *stylization*, of concentrated expression and harmonious colors, both in scenery and lighting. It is also a place of satire on matters artistic and political. Between plays like Gorky's *Mother* may come a burlesque of the principal figures of the Moscow Art Theatre or a chorus of



Design by Remisoff for *The Miracle of the Virgin Saint*.

pleasant women singing of the discomforts of railroad travel under the Revolution.

The actors have attained and hold an intimate communion of ideas and sensations between themselves and the audience. This intimacy is maintained—whether the piece be farce, satire or tragedy in pantomime, words or music. After every act Balieff, round faced and jovial, comes out before the black curtains to ask what the audience thinks of the last piece and adds that he hopes they will like the next one. This speech is answered by loud shouts from the audience. (I am speaking of a French audience.) If the approval be not loud enough Balieff leans over and whispers, "But perhaps you don't like it? We'll put out the lights and all go home, eh?" Loud clamor from the audience is the response. And so the performance goes on—often long after midnight.

The actors of "The Bat" will tell you that their theatre, though Russian, has drawn its riches from the music and literature and color of the whole world. This may be true, true because beauty is the same the world over. The artists of "The Bat" have found beauty in the common things, the things of everyday life, and have interpreted them as only the Russians can.

COLIN CAMPBELL CLEMENTS.



Design by Sudeykin for the *Fiancées* of  
*Moscow*.

## COPEAU, 1921

BY RALPH ROEDER

THE success of the Théâtre du Vieux-Colombier, after its second post-bellum season, has already reached a point at which it is evoking a tribute of reaction against it in certain quarters. The usual form of this tribute is the charge that in its adherence to a dramatic technic too limited, too "specialized," and its devotion to three or four authors of note who control its policy, it is becoming a "little chapel." Its founder, who has consolidated his theatre to so assailable a degree, is, however, far from seeing it as an established institution; for him it is still very much in process of evolution, and he is constantly combating such misunderstanding by explanations composed in the intervals of his labors as director, producer and actor.

Materially, the theatre is solvent and independent: the first goal has been won. But it was in Copeau's mind from the start that his enterprise should endure. Come what might, his was not to be one of those theatres that flourish a season and disappear, however unmeritedly. Indeed, he would probably say that such theatres do not disappear unmeritedly; with something of his Protestant sternness, he would refuse to admit the victory of an inclement world, the mere pressure of untoward circumstances: he would find in the fallen hero himself the weakness by which he fell. More than his pride, his conscience forbade him to fail. In this sense, his theatre was, it is true, from its inception "a little chapel": it was founded with the conviction of a religion, to accomplish certain reforms, and to endure. Conscience has been its motive power. The second of Copeau's pamphlets of propaganda\* is to be entitled, precisely, *La Chapelle*.

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\* *Cahiers du Vieux-Colombier*, of which No. 1 has now been published.

Copeau has brought into the theatre the temperament of a Luther: the ardor of the reformer, the austerity of the scholar, the probity of the apostle, and perhaps also with the apostle's humility the pride of his humility. It is easy to imagine him in another day in revolt against his mother Church, stigmatizing with article and hortation her secular lapses, her corruption, her decrepitude, and seceding to found a purer ministry. He was born in his own day with the same schismatic soul. It is as though, in the new incarnation, the priest had barely had time to become secular—as though, in his haste to be again at his appointed task, he had not stayed to assume a new guise and had strode into the twentieth century, shedding his cowl, unchanged, with the same shining, domed head, the same long, ascetic face, the same appraising eye and hortatory mouth. And he found, as it were, the same two-fold task confronting him: the secularization of the Book and the purification of the ministry. The first of these missions he has accomplished by restoring the classics through a vital re-interpretation of them, stripping them of their accumulated ritual of tradition to make them “understood of the people.” So lovingly has he played them that they have become as popular as the plays of the hour, that their popularity indeed has almost become a menace, in their shining concentration of genius, to the competition of contemporary writers. The same masterpieces are in the repertory of the House of Molière as in his; but he plays them as if Molière, instead of being in his tomb, were in the box-office, counting his receipts. His reverence for the great is that of one colleague for another. For him the dead are not dead: he takes a tireless pleasure in proving it not only by performing their acknowledged masterpieces but by seeking out their minor works or exhuming those of the purely “literary” theatre and playing the unplayable. It was one of these—Prosper Mérimée's *La Perichole*—which in his first season of recuperation after the war, at the most critical period, established the fortunes of the theatre. In Paris it became the play of the hour. And even the Apocrypha,

he found, could be translated into the vulgate and would serve to bring the town to church.

It is as friends—*Les Amis du Vieux-Colombier*—that he has rallied his public around him. In the name of friendship he has floated the enterprise financially. “Finally, we added that if what we are doing deserves a salary, what we are merits yet more: gratitude and friendship. The spectator, we say, who comes to the *Vieux-Colombier* to spend a pleasant evening, in paying for his seat does no more than pay for his pleasure. He does not think or feel as a friend until the day when, realizing that it is incumbent upon him to do something more, he decides to pay with his person or his money, not only to assure our subsistence but to favor our development, not only to recognize what he receives from us but to prepare that which he expects and which already can be predicted in a persistence of effort to which confidence cannot be refused. On every occasion on which our words have been so fortunate as to define clearly this spirit of work in the *Vieux-Colombier*, and the spirit of friendship which it begets in the public, we have been answered by applause.” Through friendship so understood he has consolidated his public, like his company, about him, has made of both one body, the growing cohesive force of which becomes even more perceptible as an instrument of reform. It becomes readily understandable, therefore, that to retain the respect and support of this public, so personally approached, the probity of character, the integrity of conscience, the honesty of personal life, of that lay brotherhood which he has made of his company, become responsibilities quite as important as those of talent. And the homogeneity of the company, which everyone who sees it immediately recognizes, is proof that they are being met. Through this quiet steady discipline of character and communion in work, more effectively than by invective, he accomplishes his second mission.

At this point the reformer melts into the artist, and the arbiter of taste into the contemporary. The role changes, the player remains much the same. The artist indeed does



reveal a range of sympathy and suppleness of mind, a whole gamut of modifying colors, a complexity of constitution, that are a complement as grateful as unexpected to the austerity of the reformer; but the artist is the creature, almost the creation, of the reformer's will, and is shaped in his likeness. Above all one feels in Copeau's productions the presence of an inexorable will, a feat of the intelligence. Add to this an aversion to sensuous appeal, and one has perhaps the explanation of that faint anaesthetic suggestion of the cerebral that clings about his art, alike as a producer and an actor, and that seems at times to defeat its very perfection.

There is a disposition among many who recognize his success as an actor and a director of actors and as a producer of the classics, to discount the value or the originality of the modern plays he has produced. I think these critics make the mistake of expecting too much and of allowing too little; they are perhaps under the spell of that great will, that seems so easily capable of confessing its ambitions, of evoking light in darkness with the absoluteness of a decree, as at the stroke of a wand. It must be remembered that, if he is a reformer, he is not a radical. His reforms have been directed against decrepit traditions, not against tradition. His devotion to the classics is in itself evidence of that. He has not, like Antoine, founded a theatre to propagate a new school of play-writing or a new method of acting; or like Lugne-Poë systematically to introduce foreign masterpieces or the advance guard of his own day—though, in a measure, he has incidentally done all of these things. Nor yet has he been insensible to these opportunities, these obligations. He has merely had the wisdom to remember that it was not by taking thought that he could add to his stature. His concern was not to establish a new theatre, or a free theatre, or an art theatre, but merely a good theatre; and maybe in a moment of confidence he will let you see his ambition—his hope that in time it may grow to replace the—as he sees it—moribund and over-institutionalized State Theatre. But he is in no sense a precipitate

spirit, or a restless one; his is an intensely earnest, conscientious and patient mind. He is too reflective to believe in originality as such, too fastidious to subscribe to fads, movements, cults.

He has smiled at the critics who came to his opening expecting his originality to be written broad as a placard, assertive as an advertisement, challenging as a manifesto; at those who have not realized that originality far from marking the start, could only be the far-off, hoped-for reward of his enterprise. Yet it has been in the dogged spirit of the pioneer that, with a kind of obstinate generosity, he has produced, year after year, the new plays the defects of which have not weighed with him against their promise. Of the four new plays produced this year two must be reckoned failures (Henri Ghéons's *Le Pauvre sous l'Escalier*, a mystery drawn from the Lives of the Saints; and Schlumberger's *La Mort de Sparte*, a chronicle tragedy founded on Plutarch's Lives); the third had but a critical success (Francois Porché's *La Dauphine*, a tragic romance of adolescence, in free verse); while the fourth was a diminutive, though thoroughly delightful trifle *La Folle Journée*, a one-act comedy by Emile Mazaud). Of all the new plays produced so far\* only one perhaps has definitely established itself: Charles Vilorac's *Le Paquebot Tenacity*. Under such conditions it is difficult to see the grounds for the charge that the theatre is in the hands of three or four authors of note who control its policy.

What one may trace, however, is a certain family resemblance, for all their variety, in the plays of the group who write for the theatre, qualities corresponding to those in Copeau's mind that make his inspiration felt in them. The little chapel has not instituted a cult; but in the men who have made their devotions there the prior has inspired the qualities he respects. In all one feels a great sincerity, a

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\* Undeterred by the failure of Jules Romain's *Cromedeyre-le-Vieil* (season 1919-1920), a very untheatrical composition, he is to produce next year a new play by him, a comedy: *M. Troubadec saisi par la débauche*. Other new plays announced are André Gide's *Saul*, and Henri Monnier's *Le Diner Bourgeois*.

certain artlessness, a decided sobriety of mood which is perhaps characteristic of their generation and is certainly touching in youth. These young men seem to be walking, with a wan smile, over that grave which the proverb of their elders dug them, *Si jeunesse savait, si vieillesse pouvait*. They know, and they know that they know; and perhaps, as with old age, their very knowledge has made them a little incapable—incapable, at all events, of those great swells of feeling from which masterpieces are wrought. They do not write masterpieces; but they write honestly, and their plain tales of the human heart are told without strain, and without pretentiousness. In this they too seem to partake of the discipline of the house. A certain shrewdness and sweetness run through their productions: qualities which can best be suggested to an American by saying that if any of our writers could be conceived of as fitting into that group, it would be Susan Glaspell. They are urban writers, but they seem country-bred in feeling. They are sophisticated but they are wholesome. They write without elation, but also without exaggeration. Sentiment they are not afraid of: it has, in their hands, an apple-like, nourishing sweetness. They are impatient of mere cleverness. Their irony is dignified. Take *Le Paquebot Tenacity*, for instance. Its pathos is sentimental, its hero a sentimentalist; yet how reticent is the treatment. Its bitterness is unemphatic; its tenderness cool and placid. It can reveal the sentimentality of its hero, that sentimentality which is so French, with complete detachment, yet with tranquil sympathy; and it handles his bruised heart with never a smear, adroitly, impassively. Similarly in *La Dauphine*, a tragedy of adolescence is treated by Francois Porché with easy understanding but quite without dulcification. In these plays, it must be added, humor enters hardly at all. In the comedies, of course, its caustic effect is the means—the easier device—by which that happy temperateness is secured at a stroke. Of all these plays it may be said that they are eminently of their time—disillusioned, unassertive, but heart-whole—and eminently French.

Incidentally, have we not happened here upon the revelation of another side of Copeau's remarkable temperament in those qualities which being theirs are also his? Qualities to be suspected in the apostle of friendship but less obvious, perhaps, than the austerity which has its counterpart in the religious and classical inspiration of the authors of *Le Pauvre Sous l'Escalier* and *La Mort de Sparte*? To see yet another complement of his character, more astonishing and no less fundamental, the robust love of fun and genial ingenuousness, which even more than his tenderness and his sentiment temper his innate gravity one must turn to his rollicking productions of Molière and Shakespeare; there is no contemporary author of his group that invites their display, with the single exception of Roger Martin du Gard, whose Rabelaisian peasant farce, *La Testament du Père Lelu* is the occasion of one of the most masterly performances in the entire range of the theatre's repertory. If at a performance of *Le Pauvre sous l'Escalier* or *La Dauphine* one feels the chapel, at that of *Le Paquebot Tenacity* or *La Dauphine* one feels the dovecot; in going out from the bright little theatre one almost expects to brush a downy wisp from one's sleeve, or stealthily to pocket it. But at a performance of *Le Testament du Père Lelu* or one of Molière's farces one has tumbled gleefully in the barnyard or romped in the clown's booth, at the lusty beck and call of Polichinelle; one has laughed like a child again, heart-whole. One has indeed gone a great way on the Protestant's arm. But not the whole way until, at a performance of Shakespeare, one has pondered the significance of the acclamation of *Twelfth Night* at its hundredth performance of the season, the most popular of all the theatre's productions. Only those who know the history of Shakespeare's slow and difficult acclimatization in France will realize the force of this triumph or how much of it is due to the skill of the producer and the courage of the reformer. Once again then we return to the reformer—in a new light. We see that broad, alert, enterprising spirit assailing the conservative taste of his own people, kneading

and loosening their prejudices, popularizing the works of foreign writers, to whose genius in the past the French have most obstinately objected.\*

In thus rehearsing the main outlines of Copeau's artistic personality I have, I dare say, said nothing that has not long been familiar to the American public from a first-hand acquaintance with his work. If I have ventured to retrace these points it is because, seeing his work in its own home, against its proper background, in relation to its own audience, I have seen them brought into focus and have been struck by their development on their own soil. It is the extent of this development which, I suppose, will most interest American "Friends of the Vieux-Colombier."

The audience—that audience of friends to which Copeau is constantly appealing, to reach which is the object not only of all his skill as a producer but of his devices in the very construction of his stage—is the explanation of his progress: it is the one element he lacked, naturally enough, abroad. It explains, for those who remain unconvinced by some of his experiments, what they may feel as his deficiencies.

Take, for instance, the stage and his use of it. He has sought contact with his audience to an almost literal degree in its extension and opening. The bright little concrete platform at the end of a narrow room is like an excavation into which the light seeps: one almost expects to hear the picks below it, around it, above it, seeking the rim, the sky. So like the Elizabethan stage in its ground plan and conventions, it is most like in its suggestion of the encircling open air—a suggestion that its bland uniform lighting, as of day-light, re-enforces. It is a Protestant stage, bare: upon it a play is expounded. One wonders if the Elizabethan theatre might not have made some such impression

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\* Is this loosening of prejudice, this hospitality to foreign art, a result perhaps of the war? At the same time that *Twelfth Night* at the *Vieux-Colombier* is cheered at its final performance as it has been cheered at every performance since the opening, the *Comédie-Française* has made a brilliant production of Ibsen's *The Enemy of the People*, and the critics have been unanimous in praising the clarity, the humanity, and the poetry of an author whom they had always proscribed for his obscurity, his provincialism, and his pedestrianism.

on one, if the Puritans instead of abolishing had appropriated it and inducted the actors into holy orders. Copeau indeed has appropriated a stage only, as it seems, to abolish it. It is for him a mere point of departure. It is the negation of the theatre of representation and all its seductive devices of darkness and illusion for which he has only scorn and withering epithets—"pretentious"—"cheat-the-eye"—and for which he substitutes drastically a pure scenic fiction. He is impatient of sham; but what he does actually is only to substitute one convention for another, that of the mind for that of the eye, the Protestant's choice. He eschews color. His lighting is perfunctory—biding the time, one suspects, when those invisible picks in the walls shall have found the sun.

But not the least astonishing aspect of all this enfranchisement is that he knows what to do with his liberty, when he has it. For this righteous geometrical entity which is his stage is not only the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual state of grace; it is not merely the stratification of a temperament: it is the sphere of an artist. Though

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Note: "Nothing is easier", Copeau writes me, "than to relate artistically the dimensions, the decoration, the lighting, etc. of the stage to the character and requirements of each play we produce. Intelligence suffices and a measure of technic. But that is not my ambition, which is not to realize gradually, by experiment, a new decorative formula. For scenic decoration, whether conceived of as illusion (*trompe l'oeil*) or not, and whatever may be the theatrical mechanism to which it is applied, will always be decoration, just as mechanism will always be mechanism. More or less taste, more or less art, will characterize it. It will never bring about a renovation or a transformation of the scenic *life*. I have consented resolutely to forego certain problems and even to give an imperfect hospitality to certain works which I respected for their literary value but which I did not believe destined to bring us anything new, and I have begun by bending all my efforts towards a certain emancipation, which I would have to explain at great length to make it understood, and which in any case will explain itself as soon as the new principles begin to take shape on a new stage, designed to give a new type of performance, in accordance with a new relation with the public. That is to say, there are for me no separate problems, and I shall not be able to show really what I expect of the future until I am in a position to build simultaneously and harmoniously an auditorium, a stage, and all their appurtenances. That is why I am always tempted to smile when I hear people speak of the perfection of the performances that we give. For my part, I am especially aware of their imperfection. But I do not let it worry me, as I know that that imperfection is necessary, chronological, like a stage of our conscientious researches."

he presents his play abstrusely, it would be a mistake to conclude that Copeau's treatment of it is "literary." It comes from his hands acted to the full, with a plastic effect of its own, a composition of moving figures and accented groups on different stage-levels, evolving in a spare and reticent pattern that is what he understands as a purely theatrical application of design. Effects derivative from other arts he excludes rigorously—at least in theory. In his practise a curious, a charmingly vulnerable, inconsistency appears; but it is so obvious, so ingenuous that it is disarming. The menial office of bedizening his ark—a concession to the vulgar?—he has left to painters in whose choice he has not been happy; they have, for the most part, prettified with a cheap aestheticism that gives it not only a somewhat amateurish air of makeshift but a distinct suggestion of eccentricity, such as he has been in all else careful to avoid. This has been the case especially in the setting of *Twelfth Night*. Nothing more affected and less mirthful could be imagined than the resolute skittishness of its costuming or "decoration"—as nothing could be more spontaneous and delightful than its performance.\*

Whatever exceptions one may take to the staging of *Twelfth Night*, its performance is a three-fold triumph: a triumph for the bard, a triumph for French audiences and a triumph for French actors. If in a certain ever-present keen, gem-like intelligence the racial element is slightly at variance with the looser mood of the original, in other respects, in the buoyancy, the spontaneity, the playfulness and easy freedom from self-consciousness, and above all, in the lyric intonation and amplitude of gesture, the French seem to have come closer to the measure of the Elizabethan than the modern English. Excellent as the translation is, it is the greater excellencé of the reading that compensates for translation, that makes it forgotten.

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\* I have since received from Copeau this explanation. "Your remarks upon the costuming and decoration of *Twelfth Night* are quite fair. But you must take into account the fact that this comedy was produced in the days of our debut in 1913-14 and that I may have undergone certain influences at that time to which I am no longer subject."

This leaves one to speculate on what English culture might have been had it inherited the Elizabethan tradition without the Puritan break. Obviously, the men who felt and thought as did Shakespeare and his contemporaries, with such flowering exuberance and liquid sonorousness, were men whose ears were attuned to a richness and variety of musical intonation even in everyday speech. In that the French have preserved a musical and expressive intonation in everyday speech, as the English have sacrificed it to a decorous prejudice, they are able to animate Shakespeare's ornamental style easily and naturally, without recourse to an inflated rhetoric such as so invariably disfigures the delivery of the text in modern English or American production. To this initial advantage they bring others. They bring in the first place, a continual freshness as of improvisation: I was not surprised to learn that the actors are so enamoured of the play that they continue to watch it, performance after performance, from their entrances, fretful to be on the stage again . . . playing! Of course! *Twelfth Night*! Is it not, to a Latin people, a carnival masque, with its music, its disguises, its praise of folly and its twitting of the Puritan; its amorous intrigue, its tooting buffoonery? Demure as its mood is, its inspiration is as Saturnalian as the music-hall's. It is of the season in which bonds are loosed; it loosens all laces, it tugs at all stays, it cup-crowns its companions, it cross-garters its foes. The luckless Puritan is almost pathetically momentous in his respectability: the forlorn exaggerations of his conceit are those of a man who has presumed against nature in attempting to ignore her, and it is nature's revenge to reveal herself in him so preposterously. When vanity has let leak his humanity, there is no longer any pumping his unfathomable folly; the poor man has been so unwisely sagacious. It is as if one saw Malvolio before his mirror, indulging himself in his privacy, secure as he thinks from reproof or ridicule, and tasting in imagination the joys of that humanity he dreads in the flesh; and suddenly his privacy is public! So Albert Savry plays him: a decorous monster



on two feet, the moral of whose fable runs on four. Mere animal spirits without an intellectual lining of satire the French appreciate, perhaps, less readily; for this reason Sir Toby, though he is played by an excellent actor, seems a trifle attenuated in his rowdyism, less liverish in his untentiousness than caustic with a quaint facetiousness of disposition. Sheer phantasticating humor, however, like pure poetry, they respond to immediately. The Andrew Aguecheek of Louis Jovet, in its inimitable drollery, its porcelain innocuousness, remains an exquisite interpretation, in the very spirit of the creator, of a part usually blunted by exaggeration. I submit that it is not often that the "star" of a performance of *Twelfth Night* is the Andrew Aguecheek. Certainly the actor who can play Shakespeare's ninny with the grace of their conception is rarer than the actor who can compass his rogues, his villains, or his heroes. Louis Jovet has shown an incomparable felicity in a wide range of grotesque creations; in his Andrew Aguecheek he has given us a human being, of discreet extravagance, of lovable fatuity. His humor is so sleek that a caress seems the only possible form of appreciation: to applaud would rudely startle that delectable ninny. With his infantile eyes opening on a world he will never understand but in which he blandly claims a place with the best—and who will deny it him?—with his quizzical lip ever uncertain of its cue to smile: with his moonstruck gravity and its hint of decorous breeding under all its fatuity; with his timidity that gives him, fleetingly, a kind of wistful appeal, he is as arch as infancy and as forlorn as senility. His hands hang limp as the paws of a squirrel; his knees have a furtive congenital droop and seem in perpetual sly conference toward the support of that listless frame on its patient peregrinations in mischief. The eyes listen with incredible vacancy and incredible attention. He is always late in laughing; he laughs because the others do; and he stops suddenly, as if startled by the sound of his own voice, with a timid peep to see if he has been detected. Futile, endearing precaution. He is never so much as noticed by the others. He is the back-

ward child, always playing by himself, however hard he caper in imitation of his companions. The negative droop of his body fairly calls for plucking. He has found his counterpart in Toby with the infallibility of natural law. His face is the echo of an echo. He is in nature as the void is in nature. This is unfathomable fooling. The art of the actor has been equal to that of the poet in its guilelessness; as there is no pointing in the one, there is no logic in the other; the hand on the keyboard seems to slip, at random, through unrelated tonalities, resulting, however, always in a slender and delicate harmony. And the facility of the performance attests its inspiration, as its rightness is proven by the fact that it has not changed since it was seen in New York.

A performance that has developed since then is the Viola of Suzanne Bing. This Viola is a Tanagra figure fluently modelled in a temperate material, a grave image of alacrity. Slim and wren-like, she stands in the middle of the stage, as on a pedestal poised for song, and tilting her head back, she begins to speak. And as she speaks, her eyes widen, as if she felt the Illyrian airs across her brow. She looks reflectively ahead and smiles at what she sees, demurely self-reliant. She seems to have taken the famous image of Patience on a monument, smiling at grief, as her device, to show how gallantly she could bear it. Her movements are rare, flowering and extremely deliberate, as if the stage were indeed her circumscribing monument.

But that smile is her secret. It recurs after every bewilderment, after every disappointment. When her musing threatens melancholy, suddenly you see it gather in the corners of her mouth and with a rapid flare kindle, fuse-like, the entire face; the eyes, last of all, the thoughtful experiencing eyes, absorb and discharge it coolly. This self-possession, this knowing air of latent courage, is perhaps what some of her critics have felt as "hardness" in her. Hard she is not, certainly; but behind all her varying moods, traced with a diamond-like distinctness, a gem-like transparency of art, one feels a certain controlling intelligence,

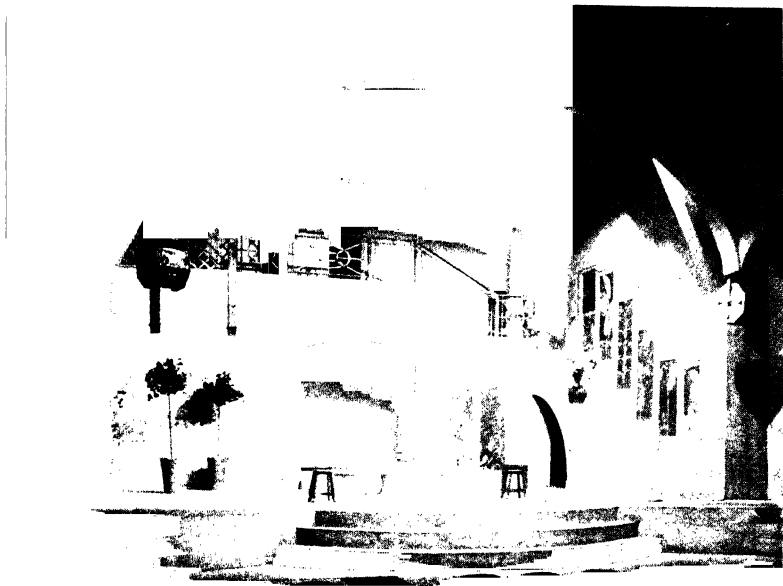
## THEATRE ARTS MAGAZINE

a detachment, a reasonableness, a poise, that is, I think, the one specifically French element in her impersonation. This smiling Viola is always "mistress of her event." She has no tears until the moment of her re-union with her brother—tears of joy. The passages of self-pity she reads with an arch, deprecating half-smile and dismisses them as a too-fond indulgence. Her scenes with Orsino are exquisite in their reticence and tact. They are the very embodiment in words of silence. She refers to herself only to dismiss herself—loyal to the hopelessness of her plight. To repine or to appeal has not so much as occurred to her. Her sovereign and undismayed spirit is that of a soul eminently "well-born."—She has never been ship-wrecked in Illyria.

A creed may be allowed its idiosyncracies; but who shall say that they are in the broad doctrine of this chapel, that is not only the platform of a reform or the pious pantheon of the living dead but a confessional and playground of the human spirit, where the perpetual wedding of laughter and tears that its ceremonies celebrate, ends in an issue of friends?

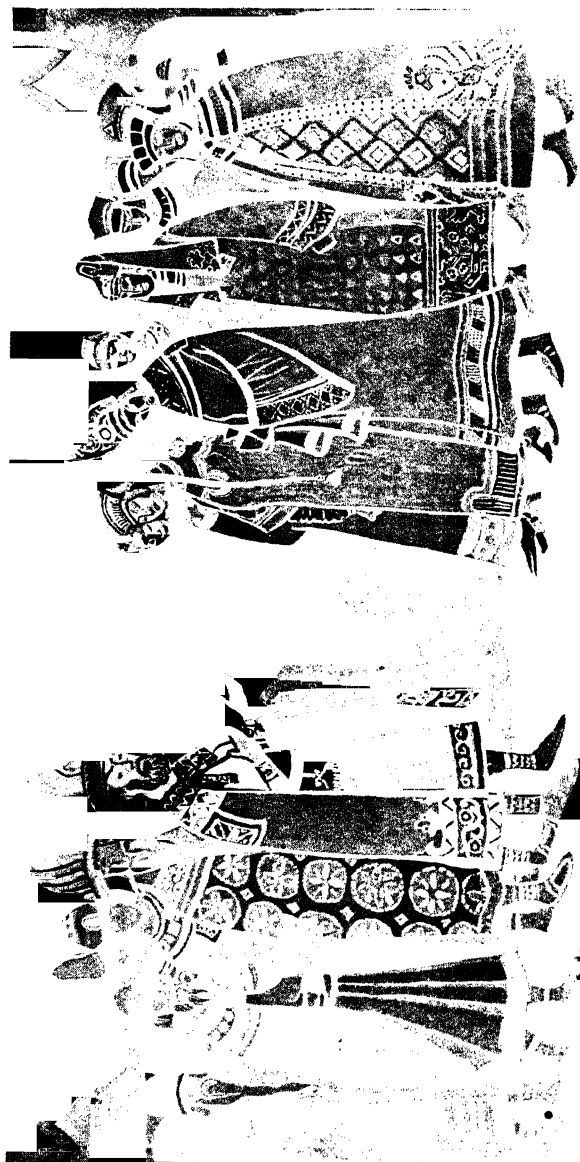


Insignia of the Théâtre du Vieux Colombier



*From The Theatre of Tomorrow.*

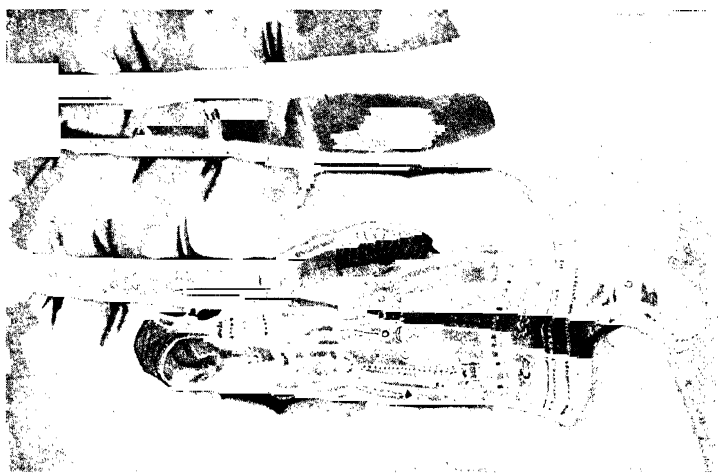
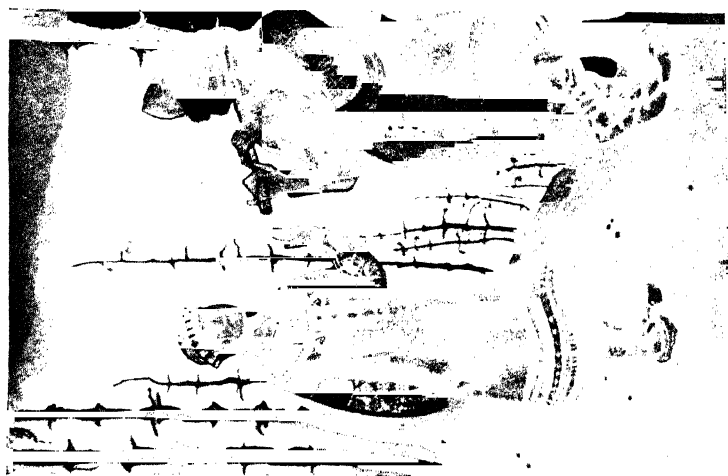
Two productions on the stage of Jacques Copeau's Théâtre du Vieux Colombier in Paris. There is no proscenium and no separation of auditorium and stage other than the riser to the level of the forestage and the steps to the main stage above. The setting is identical in space with the stage itself, exits being made into adjoining rooms. The use and adaption of the permanent structure, balcony and stairs, may be seen by a comparison of the setting for *Twelfth Night* above, with that for *La Surprise de l'Amour* below.



On this and the following pages appear designs by Nicolas Roerich for the Chicago Opera Company's forthcoming production of *Sakuntala*. The suggestion of the primitive is evident in the group of "Bohars in Summer," reproduced above.



A winter group from *Suequtolik*.



Three costumes from *Suqauratchka*; at the left Kupawo and Lel; at the right, the Snow Maiden.

# THE UNITY OF ART

BY NICOLAS ROERICH

**A**LL Art is one—indivisible; only the mode of expression is different.

Just as a tree may have many branches, and each branch many leaves, yet all united in and growing from the same root, so it is with Art. Art also has its many branches, and each one may be subdivided into leaves and blossoms; yet all are one, drawing strength from the same sap, springing from the same great root—the eternal sap of inspiration.

This is an especially important truth in all work connected with the theatre. I have painted much for opera, ballet and drama, and have derived the greatest inspiration from being closely associated with the other great arts. I would, however, never paint scenery for opera or ballet without first having an intimate knowledge both of the drama and the music in question. I study both deeply—not so much from the purely musical or dramatic point of view, but to get at the soul that lies behind both, which must be one and the same if the work is to be great. Having steeped myself in the great idea, the inspiration that gave birth to the work, and let it take entire possession of me, I try to express the same thought, the same inspiration in painting, that others have already expressed in music and words.

Especially I feel myself related to music, and as a composer, when writing, chooses a certain key to write in, so I paint in a certain key—a key of color; or perhaps it would be better to say a leitmotiv of color on which I base the whole. Thus, when I painted scenery for the *Valkyrie* for the Russian Opera, I felt the first act as black and yellow. This was my ground tone, for it seemed to me to be the ground tone of the music with its deep tragedy and its sud-



den flashings of brief happiness of Siegmund and Sieglinde. So much I felt this ground tone that I placed the hearth not at the side where it is usually found, but towards the centre, so that when Siegmund relates the sad story of his lonely life, he and Sieglinde at one end of the table sit bathed in the light of the fire, the yellow flames shining on their golden hair, their heritage from the gods, while Hunding, at the other end sits, a black silhouette outlined against the glow, like a sombre presence of evil.

In the last act I painted under the influence of the "Feuerzauber." This music impressed me deeply, and at the performances that I saw, the stage arrangements with Brunnhilde lying right on the front of the stage and the ridiculous little spurts of flame, no bigger than a lit match might give, always angered me with their utter inadequateness of expression as compared with the music. I placed Brunnhilde's resting place right at the back, on the topmost pinnacle of the rocky summit of the mountain, so that when Wotan puts her to sleep, covered with her shield, she lies raised far above the rest of the scenery on the very top of the mountain. Also I discarded the usual spurts of real fire, and made my flames of the finest transparent silk, which, with the draught of the ventilators and strongly lit up from underneath, gave, in the darkness of fallen night, a perfect illusion. Moreover, I arranged them so that we could have the same crescendo on the stage as goes on in the orchestra, and as the music builds up and up to a huge climax, so the flames leapt higher and higher and spread with the music, until at the end Brunnhilde's mountain is one vast sheet of flame. So I felt the music, and so I painted striving to attain the effect of one vast chord composed of music and color.

In the same way I strove to attune myself to Ibsen or Maeterlinck when I was painting scenery for their dramas, painting in soft shades what they so delicately express in words.

This has always been my theory: Art is one—indivisible; but, like the sun it beautifies the earth with many different

## UNITY OF ART

rays. It is quite impossible to understand the extreme specialization in art of modern times. The same art we may express today in fresco, tomorrow in theatrical decorations, then in mosaic, or ceramics. And the button or the fork sculptured by Cellini is on the same level of art with the fresco of Leonardo. The classification of art, as high art, or commercial, or industrial art is created only by our modern mechanical civilization. Do imagine the astonishment of an old Italian master on apprehending this strange classification in art. There may exist a true art or false art, but what other classification may there be in the supreme region of art. But culture is coming!

Nowadays we hear so many diverse opinions on the Theatre. Sometimes we see a few indeed fine productions, but, in general, the masses are under the influence of the ugliest aspects of the Broadway Cinema Theatres. Nowadays the chief problem before a true artist is to enter fearlessly those houses of ugliness, and to show light amid surrounding darkness. Art for all. Everybody must enjoy true art. The greatest harm is to give to the masses false and conventional art. The gates of the "sacred source" must be wide open for everybody. And this light of art will inflame innumerable hearts with new love for Beauty!

First this feeling will come unconsciously, but after all it will purify human consciousness. And I know how many young hearts in America are searching for something real and beautiful. Give it them!

Do listen to what says a Hindu Saint: "In the Nirvikalpa Samadhi, (the greatest realization) the essence, the Brahman experience, Beauty, Art, Science, and all that which is divine as the essence of human knowing and striving, appear as rays of various light in the rainbow of that Divine transcendent consciousness. Coming out from this experience, the Saint sees Brahma, in a super-exalted manner of feeling, in everything, saying: *'Verily Art is Brahman; Verily Science is Brahman; Verily all Glory, all Magnificence, all Greatness is Brahman.'*"

Do realize those wise words!

## THE NEXT THEATRE\*

BY KENNETH MACGOWAN

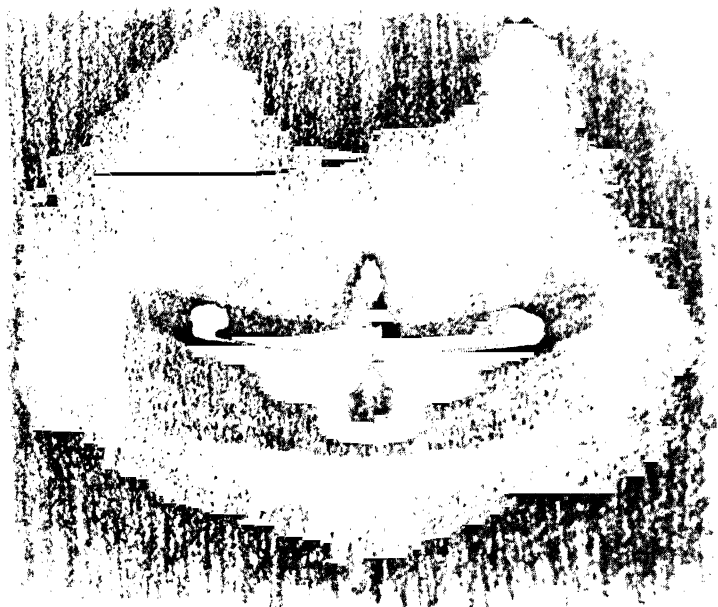
FOR fifty years our theatre has been steadily and slowly working over from the bizarre operatic structure set upon the drama of Europe by the bursting luxuriance of the seventeenth century Italian courts, towards a reticent auditorium which should display, upon an illusively lighted stage within a frame, a realistic representation of life. At last in the work of American architects like Ingalls and Blackhall and Germans like Oscar Kaufmann, in such theatres as Henry Miller's and Maxine Elliott's in New York, and the Hebbel Theater and the Volksbühne in Berlin, we have reached a form appropriate to the purposes of the nineteenth drama instead of to the masques, pageants, ballets and operas which absorbed the energies of the Italian courts two centuries before, and which shaped that ornate gilt and plaster shell into which the drama that followed Shakespeare and Molière was thoughtless enough to slip.

For a hundred years scattered artists, architects and directors have been fighting both the court opera house and the modern peep-show theatre in an endeavor to create still another form of playhouse—a structure neither as absurd as the opera house nor as limiting as the picture frame stage; that is, a playhouse not narrowly archaeologic, yet instinct with the live and healthy theatricalism of the Elizabethan stage, the dignity and grandeur of the Greek; a theatre fitted to every exigency of theatrical presentation; a theatre for the future as well as the past; a theatre for the drama that grows tired of the limitations of realism.

All his effort towards a new playhouse to succeed the present theatre as the present theatre succeeded the theatre

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\* Since the first month of the new season has brought little of moment to the New York theatres, Mr. Macgowan's customary review is omitted from this issue. Instead the Theatre Arts prints portions of a chapter and certain illustrations from his forthcoming book, *The Theatre of Tomorrow*.



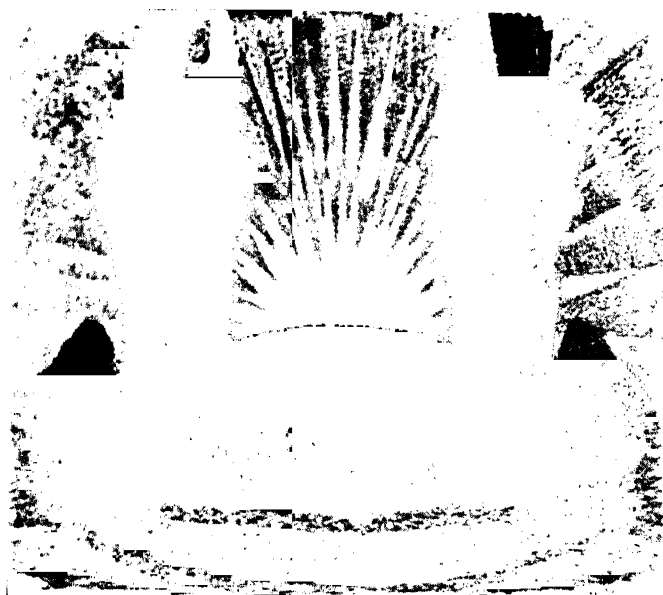
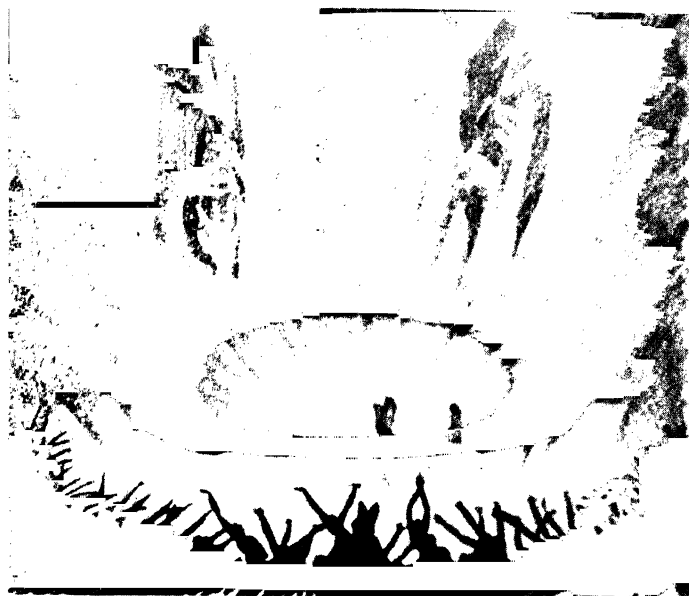
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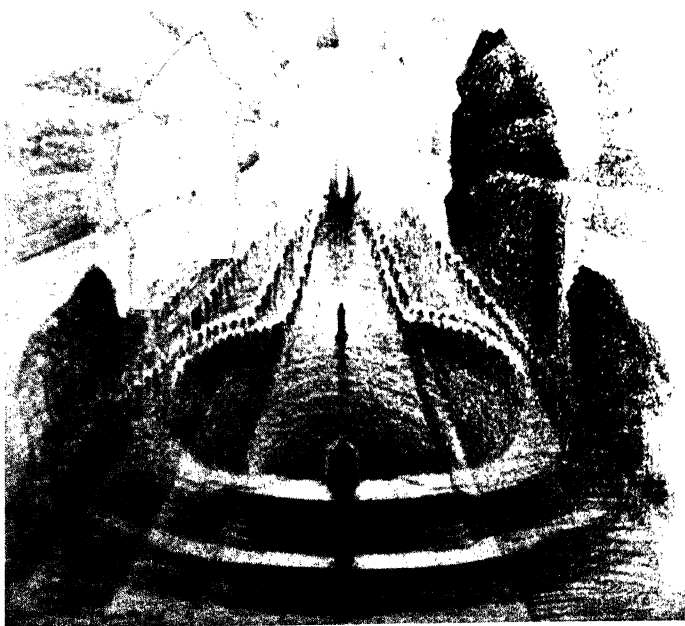


TWO

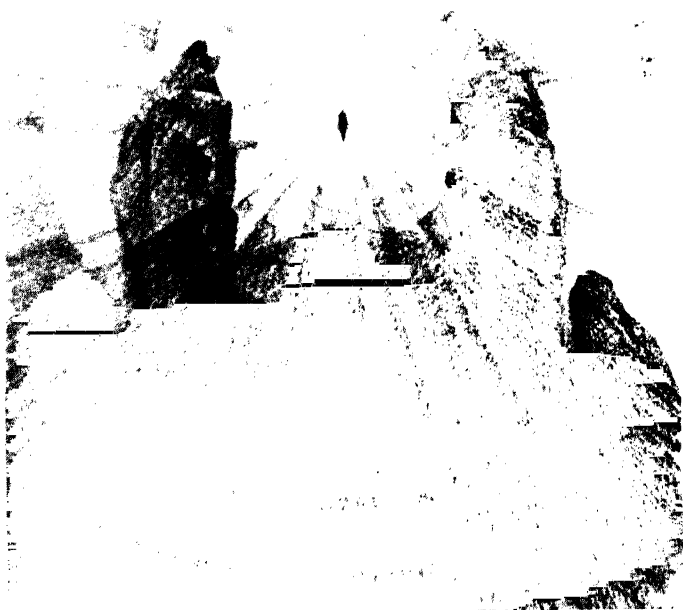
Eight designs by Norman-Bel Geddes for *The Divine Comedy*. For explanatory description see page 310.







SEVEN



EIGHT

## THE NEXT THEATRE

of Garrick, of Shakespeare, of the mystery plays, and of Greek tragedy, has evolved no more than three definitely and completely functioning houses; but it has left a great mass of most interesting and fecund and significant experiment and suggestion. Up to the past ten years most of it was German; and most of it was busy with discreet modifications of the existing features of theatrical architecture.

The first indication of a change in the conception of the relations of auditorium and stage reaches back to that great practical force in the theatre, Goethe. At the beginning of the past century he associated himself with a remarkable and innovating architect, Karl Friedrich Schinkel in theories and projects which ultimately resulted in the plans for the theatre in Weimar with which Goethe's name is still associated. The object of Goethe, imbued with sudden enthusiasm over the discovery that Shakespeare did not write for a stage of definite scenes, was to bring back the apron and renew the intercourse of spectator and actor. Schinkel's plans for recreating the forestage had perhaps little effect upon the Italianate playhouse of his day; but in the light of twentieth century effort they are most suggestive. They proved the forerunner of much experiment in Germany before Max Littmann, Georg Fuchs and others definitely established the forestage and its portals as essential to imaginative drama.

As Schinkel worked with Goethe, so Gottfried Semper, the other outstanding theatre architect of nineteenth century Germany, found association with a great creative dramatist and director, Wagner. With him Semper labored upon the problem of the proscenium, evolving the "mystic abyss" or neutral and empty frame between auditorium and stage, which Wagner desired as a means of heightening the illusion of another world. Since that attempt to remove the actor from the reality of contact with his audience amounts in one way to the perfecting of the now outworn picture frame idea, it seems to me that Semper's greatest contribution lay rather in his work upon the auditorium itself. There he developed Schinkel's idea of seating the audience in a single,



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steeply rising auditorium, somewhat after the manner of the Greeks, and thus bringing the spectators into closer spiritual relation with one another as well as with the stage.

In Max Littmann, the greatest theorist and builder of the modern German theatre, the "Rang versus Ring" idea of substituting a single, unified and well-graded bank of seats for the aristocratic, anti-social and visually bad arrangement of superimposed galleries, finds its warmest and strongest support. But Littmann's efforts have gone into more extensive and original reform in his "adaptable proscenium," which combines the ordinary realistic picture frame and the Wagner "mystic abyss" with forestage and entrances in the proscenium frame. More than a dozen theatres in Germany now testify to Littmann's fruitful experiments with stage, proscenium and auditorium, notably the Schiller Theater in Charlottenburg, the twin theatres of Stuttgart and the Munich Künstler Theater. His reforms have re-made both auditorium and stage, combining them in a perfected structure that goes as far towards the new playhouse as you can go without casting aside all resemblance to our familiar theatre.

When the catastrophe of the Great War fell upon the theatres of Europe Germany was manifestly ready for experiments along far more radical lines. Various schemes for Shakespearean stages, forestages, portals, permanent settings and inner prosceniums, all tended towards the development of both spectators and directors who were eager for experiment on lines leading away from the realistic theatre and towards a new form of playhouse. At least two significant German experiments preceeded the war.

One was in a place and an institution quite apart from the commercial theatre—the Jaques-Dalcroze School of Eurythmics in Hellerau near Dresden. There Dalcroze brought to his assistance two remarkable men; one was A. von Salzmänn, reputed the greatest authority on lighting in the European theatre, whom Maurice Browne calls "the master of us all"; the other, that pioneering giant, Adolphe Appia, who here found his first opportunity to

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work unhampered on the practical details of production. The hall, which was designed by Heinrich Tessenow, combined both stage and auditorium in a single oblong room. Whatever served as stage and setting was placed at one end. The other end of the room was occupied by the banked seats of the audience. Except for an open space of shining floor, there was no division between the spectators and the stage, not even the division of lighting. Both the audience and the setting were illumined by the same lambent and mysterious glow proceeding from the translucent walls around, behind and above them. These walls were of something resembling balloon silk, covered with cedar oil; behind this surface were batteries of some 10,000 bulbs so arranged and circuited as to permit all manner of shades and gradations of light. Frank E. Washburn Freund in the *English Stage Yearbook* for 1914 graphically describes this illumination as "a diffused light resembling daylight without visible sun." The stage and the scene were identical and consisted merely of a complex of movable platforms and steps, supplemented by simple flats and hangings. These could be rearranged almost endlessly.

The other radical experiment towards a new playhouse was made by Max Reinhardt in his productions of *Oedipus Rex* by Sophocles, *Orestes*, the *Miracle* and *Everyman*, in circuses, and lead finally to his remodeling of one of these circus buildings into the Grosses Schauspielhaus in Berlin. The success of these presentations, particularly of *Oedipus*, was tremendous; for Reinhardt drew from the proximity of his audience to the immense crowd of actors in its midst, a new and extraordinary intimacy combined with grandeur and power. *Oedipus* was first mounted in 1910 and was shown to 317,000 people in 93 performances in 26 cities; at least 50,000 spectators gained admittance at less than a quarter a head.

Here, as elsewhere, it can hardly be denied that Reinhardt drew inspiration from Craig, who dreamed thus of what the German producer created in his Theatre of the Five Thousand: "I see a great building to seat many

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thousands of people. At one end rises a platform of heroic size on which figures of a heroic mould shall move. The scene shall be such as the world shows us, not as our own particular little street shows us. The movements of these scenes shall be noble and great: all shall be illuminated by a light such as the spheres give us, not such as the footlights give us, but such as we dream of."

The philosophy back of the Theatre of the Five Thousand is described by Reinhardt's literary director, Arthur Kahane, in the following passage translated by Huntley Carter from *Die Blätter des Deutschen Theaters* and printed in his *Theatre of Max Reinhardt*:

"This theatre can only express the great eternal elemental passions and the problems of humanity. In it spectators cease to be mere spectators; they become the people; their emotions are simple and primitive, but great and powerful, as becomes the eternal human race. Many things that appear to most people to be inseparable from the theatre are discarded. No curtain separates stage and auditorium. On entering the theatre the spectator feels and is impressed by the possibilities of space, and the essential mood is created in him to be preserved after the piece has begun. No small, strongly circumscribed, impassable frame separates the action of the play from the outer world, and the action flows freely through the whole of the theatre. The peep-show character of the scene, which was known neither to the stage of the ancients, to the Shakespearean stage, nor to the Molièrian stage, and which to people of a conservative frame of mind is still the highest point of theatrical art, simply because they are not aware that they merely worship a fossilised fragment of Italian Opera and Ballet tradition, has vanished. The chorus arises and moves in the midst of the audience; the characters meet each other amid the spectators; from all sides the hearer is being impressed, so that gradually he becomes part of the whole, and is rapidly absorbed in the action, a member of the chorus, so to speak. This close contact is the chief feature of the new form of the stage. It makes the spectator a part of the

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action, secures his entire interest, and intensifies the effect upon him."

The Grosses Schauspielhaus, which was pictured in page 167 of volume four of *The Theatre Arts Magazine*, retains the elements of the circus performance and combines them with many features of the theatre of the past. The audience, something over three thousand in number, is seated in one bank of seats surrounding the acting space. This space is first of all the orchestra, as in the ancient Greek theatre. There upon the floor of the auditorium, in the midst of the spectators, passes much of the most intimate action and there the great mobs move. They gain access to this space from runways passing beneath the seats of the audience and from portals near the stage proper. The stage itself is a huge affair, as large as any in common use in Berlin and equipped with plaster dome, revolving stage and curtain. From the stage, which itself may be built up into various levels, steps and platforms lead down into the orchestra. Thus the house combines the essential feature of the Greek theatre,—the orchestra in the midst of the spectators—with the essential feature of the modern theatre,—the mechanically perfect stage. From this venture Reinhardt has gone on to the project of the Salzburg Festspielhaus described and pictured in the last issue of this magazine.

Attempts to create the new playhouse have been fewer outside Germany. In only one case, the case of Jacques Copeau and his Théâtre du Vieux Colombier has one of them been successful; but in that case I feel, in spite of no attempt to range wide or to gain the splendid proportions of mass-action, the end has been most notably attained. The theatre of Copeau has been successfully imitated in the Tribune in Berlin.

The nearest parallel to Reinhardt for size and grandeur of conception—outside the frankly imitative productions of *Oedipe, Roi de Thebes*, and of spectacles by Gemier in Paris—is the masque form and the open-air auditorium created by Percy MacKaye in America. In his *Masque of St. Louis*

and his *Caliban*, MacKaye has gone far towards charting some of the essentials of the mass-theatre of the future. In these wind-blown and gigantic entertainments, he has reposed an unfortunate reliance on the spoken word and neither his verse nor his prose has had the simplicity and vigor that such a form of entertainment demands. But in his imagination he has seen truly the possibility of community drama, of magnificent communal spectacles fused of color and movement, art and humanity. MacKaye is the natural inheritor of grand theatrical conceptions from an extraordinary father, Steele MacKaye, who, shortly before he died, had planned and partially built for the Chicago World's Fair in 1893 a gargantuan playhouse called the Spectatorium.

Norman-Bel Geddes, the young and brilliant designer, made almost his first contribution to the stage in a plan for a great playhouse of remarkable design. In his scheme, devised in 1914, the stage was to become a part of the auditorium. The audience, seated diagonally from corner to corner of the great domed hall, were to look upon simple set-pieces, plastic units, architectural details, appearing in the opposite corner of the structure. Behind these objects the curving wall—which could be illuminated as a sky-dome—would reach outward and upward until it disappeared in the darkness of the house. During the brief intermissions, while the theatre was plunged in darkness, the section of the floor containing the setting would be lowered into the basement, the setting and its rolling platform shoved aside and another setting, already prepared, wheeled into place and raised immediately, with the actors upon it, up into the theatre above.

In 1921, upon the six hundredth anniversary of the death of Dante, Geddes set to work upon a most ambitious project for the presentation of *The Divine Comedy* as a great drama of light and words in Madison Square Garden. Here he schemed to build a gigantic and adroitly curving diabolical pit of many levels, surrounded on three sides by the audience and rising on the fourth against a

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gauze background which would finally be brilliantly stained by the light of paradise. Upon each side of the pit next to the gauze would stand two gigantic plinths upon which, in mysterious lights and silhouettes, men would pose great demoniacal wings or angelic pinions appropriate to the progress of Dante across the pit of hell and up to the celestial regions. The two plans reproduced should make clear the shape and nature of the permanent stage, the pit or bowl, out of which arise varying lights and about which move the damned. To visualize the development of lights and action and the changes thus made in the otherwise unaltered stage, Geddes executed a large number of drawings, eight of which are reproduced herewith. These take Dante through Hell and Purgatory.

Design number one shows Dante stopped by the three beasts. To reach Heaven Virgil tells him he must go down through the earth. Leaving his position half-way up the far side of the bowl, Dante descends into the depths of the pit. In the next picture, Dante and Virgil appear on the near side of the pit. Dante glimpses Hell for the first time. In design number three, Dante and Virgil stand upon the far side of the pit, observed by a crowd of the damned, who stare across at them. A horde of ape-like humans wearing huge wings cling to the two plinths at each side toward the back. These plinths are hollow in construction with stairways on the inside and various elevations at which the actors may appear. Design number four shows the damned within the pit shouting to Dante and Virgil on the other side. In the fifth design, the damned are appealing frantically to Dante and Virgil, the shadows of their tortured bodies thrown across the whole scene. In design number six, the scene is changed, principally by lighting effects, to simulate Purgatory. The plinths take the form of two guardian angels. This is done by a group of actors seated on the different levels of the plinths, holding forms, the combination of which gives the desired impression. It will be noticed that, in the Hell episodes, the lighting all comes from within the pit, in the Purgatory episodes the lighting

comes from beyond, and in Paradise it comes from overhead. The sphere of light which is shown rising in the sixth design reaches its zenith in the seventh. From its midst comes a shape made by actors carrying various forms suggesting a chariot; from this chariot steps Beatrice to meet Dante. In this drawing Geddes shows the possibility of forming many interesting designs on the stage merely from the arrangement of the people in various patterns. In the last design Dante and Beatrice are shown rising from Purgatory to Heaven. Geddes's group of drawings naturally completes the ascent to Heaven. Unfortunately space prevents the reproduction of the entire series.

Another American artist, the Dutch expatriate, Hermann Rosse, has dreamed of new playhouses, as his designs reproduced in the April, 1921, issue of this magazine testify. Rosse has spent much time and energy on schemes for uniting the lines of the proscenium opening of a theatre with the lines of the house, for bringing a real artistic unity into the architecture of the auditorium. He has gone beyond this to the designing of stages with new and beautiful approaches—doors set in the proscenium itself; "flowery ways," leading along the sides of the auditorium till they merge with a stage flung out in graceful curves beyond the confines of our footlights; steps down from the stage to the floor of the auditorium; the stage itself divided in ingenious ways by walls, pillars or screens of patterned color to make a background for the play. Rosse conceives "the pure structural beauty of an unadorned building, a beautifully finished platform," as sufficient for the mounting of many of the finest plays now written or to be written. The new playhouse, as Rosse sees it, "will probably lead by way of a slow development of the purely constructive stage and the oratory platform to a new type of churchlike theatre with reflecting domes, beautiful materials, beautiful people—to a revitalizing of art by a complete reversal from the artificial to the living real."

To my mind the most significant experiment toward a new playhouse is Jacques Copeau's. Not because it is per-

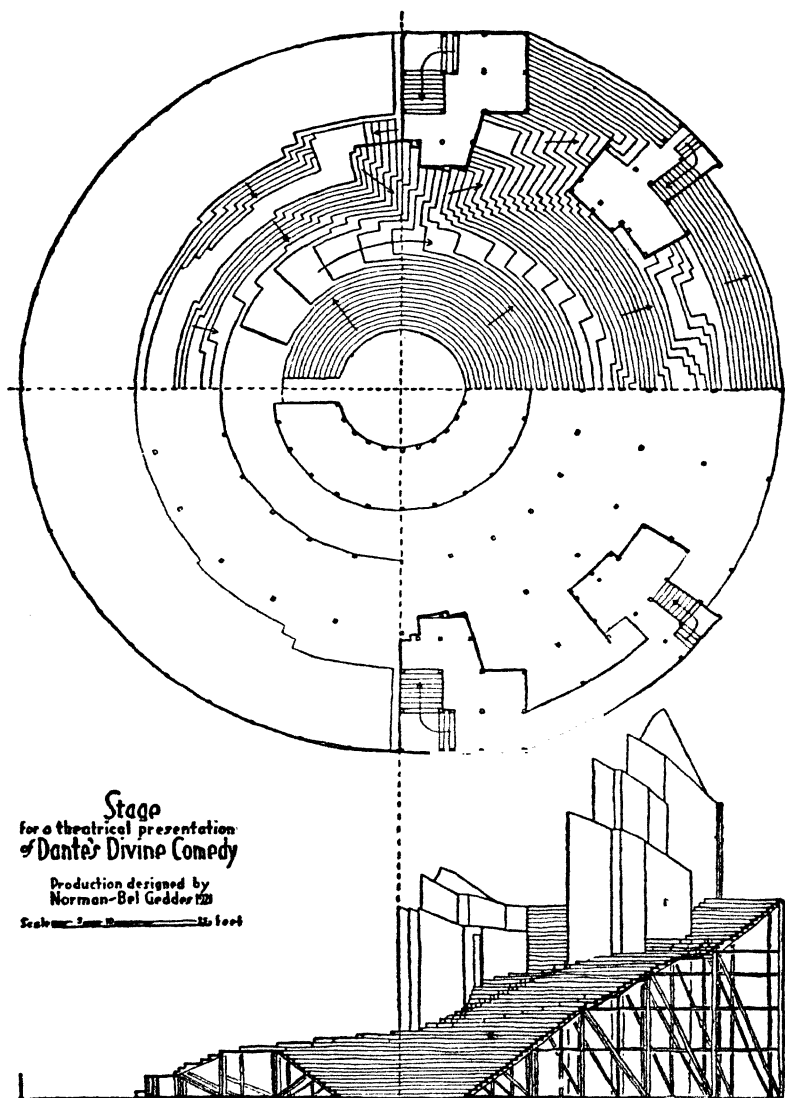
## THE NEXT THEATRE

fect or complete; for you will note in Ralph Roeder's article in this issue that Copeau accepts it as a makeshift and expects to build differently when he does build. The Théâtre du Vieux Colombier, with its stage which has no proscenium and its permanent scene which is co-extensive with the stage room itself, sprang out of Copeau's need for a house where the actors should be emphasized again and in a new—or a very old—way.

Jacques Copeau began his theatre from something already in existence. He did not expect to make great reforms in stage or auditorium. He merely wanted to utilize fully the miserably tiny hall that his small resources could afford. It had no room for "effects," for all the paraphernalia of the normal stage. That did not matter. Copeau was more intent upon the actor. Accordingly he cleared out the wings and old picture frame. In their stead, he installed a permanent architectural setting at the back, a sort of balcony reached by flights of steps, and fairly convertible into whatever Copeau needed in background and superstructure. Or if he did not need it, it disappeared behind hangings or simple walls held in ingenious columns. At the sides, there was no proscenium, merely doors in the theatre walls with a forestage between. Here was an instrument of natural and definite structure, yet fluid enough to permit of reshapings that gave *Les Frères Karamosov* from Dostoyefsky and *Twelfth Night* in the same theatre.

This scheme of playhouse Copeau achieved again when the war sent him to New York as the ambassador of French culture—ten years ahead of his time. He made over the Garrick Theatre in loose imitation of the stage that had come by necessity in Paris, and the results were admirable and right. Back again in Paris, after his sojourn in New York, Jacques Copeau has won a success that even the boulevards may envy. I am not disinclined to believe that it was the new playhouse that had a very great deal to do with it; for the new playhouse was an expression of his own feeling for the fresh demands of the time, a reaction against antiquated mechanism.

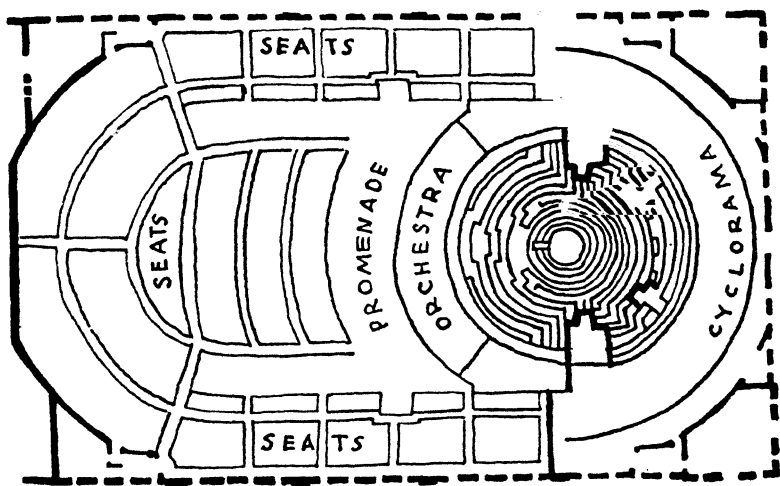




Plan and section of the curious, doughnut-shaped structure, upon which the action of Geddes's projected production of *The Divine Comedy* would pass. The plinths or towers at the sides are to be occupied by actors carrying huge wings and other shapes. Note the position of this bowl in the plan of Madison Square Garden on page 315. Arrows show rise of steps.

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Of the new theatres thus far evolved, Copeau's is the most complete, studied and yet natural experiment; Reinhardt's the most ambitious. Neither is necessarily conclusive. They are tentative. Their significance is, however, prophetic of a home for the new play.



Plan of the proposed arrangement of seats and stage for Norman-Bel Gedde's production of *The Divine Comedy*.

## HOW REINHARDT WORKS WITH HIS ACTORS

BY GERTRUD EYSOLDT

**M**ORNING. The rehearsal about to begin. Daylight in the dusty morning-grey of the theatre. A groping through the dark rows of the parquet, hands feeling their way along the backs of the seats. The eyes blind with darkness. The stage ahead a light cutout in a hazy blue glow. A faded daylight falls in streaks from above through the flies. The stage is empty—two scene walls, fastened together, are leaning against one side. This emptiness of the stage. Its purity. So touching to the actor. Like a stretched but untouched canvas for the painter!

The actors come one after another. Slow, ill-humored, drowsy. Reserve in every feature. The attitude of saving up for something. Complete inertia. Reinhardt's face and figure reveal themselves through the dark in front of the first row of parquet seats. The actors blink down at him with sidewise glances. Something stirs within them, although they seem indifferent. There is a blending of the fighting spirit and unrest. Reinhardt has his book in his hand. His features are apathetic. Morning pushes all of these night-folk wearily ahead of her. Phantasy is settled all about, absolutely motionless. And we know we must set her free. We are afraid. Great energy is needed for that. What you win in the prosiness of a morning rehearsal lives doubly in the inspiration of the night. The artificial light that now illuminates the stage insufficiently for the rehearsal does not awaken the evening mood—the streaks of daylight cut through it. And yet this hostility of the daylight that breaks in everywhere upon the brain and seeks to tear your inner life to pieces, at last fires you by contrast. Suddenly you understand how the deepest sorrows flit like shadows over white plaster at sunny noontide through the indifferent, hurrying crowd.

## HOW REINHARDT WORKS WITH HIS ACTORS

Reinhardt calls us out of our first lethargy. We begin hesitatingly. Ashamed. Listening within ourselves. Our voices are strange to us. Suddenly a ring, a well-known tone in our voice rouses us! The melody moves shyly. Reinhardt's look answers with a flash of interest. He puts an emphasis into the speech, quietly, as you call to one who is just awakening. His glances are more firmly fixed on his players—we bestir ourselves. Again that inward hesitation. Reinhardt takes his book, we listen—divided between an eagerness to understand and a resistance, half-assumed. Our own damming up of the inner stream appears as modesty. We are off the track. Nothing convinces us. We suffer. Reinhardt pretends not to be especially attentive in order to give us a chance to free ourselves of our confusion. He indulges us. Then if he catches a soaring tone from us he holds it pitilessly fast and will not let it go; no falling back is granted us. He tortures us, he drives us, he resolves every doubt. He repeats. Once again we hold the reins, we pull them taut, we slacken them, until we know the pace. Once warmed up, all the repressions melt away. A rhythm of intensity and exhaustion swings us in a circle. Reinhardt takes hold of it and bends it. We give ourselves up to the play. We feel this partner—his face, his glance, his hands, his figure, his aspiration and his opposition, his hope and his conflict. Reinhardt binds voices together, pulls distances to pieces. He draws us up to rapture, drags us back to *syncope*. On his exit from the scene a player drops down worn out upon a stool or a part of the set, to quiet the tumult within him and not to give it up to the meaningless horde back of the scenes outside of the play. Things are set to rights. A self-mastery conquers the player, holding him until he sets foot on the stage again—setting himself free or listening, from time to time, to the quiet progress of the play. Reinhardt has his book. We have our parts. Each of us has brought his own, worked out or learned, and carries it in momentous hands. And book and parts and ideas are remolded here by the stream of new minds they meet, are given new lines written

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in blood. What was letter and thought grows to feeling, that which was feeling grows to an inner picture. The "magic sap" drowns us too in the ocean of madness. Beautiful and vivid are these dreams on the blank canvas of the stage. Out of the morphia of inspiration grow new measures of infinity for us. We try to be a part of them, to drag reality closer. With uncertain footsteps we feel for solid ground. Now tables and chairs and walls and stairs are thrust upon us, color surrounds us. Our strength must live in them. We give warmth to lifeless things. The balustrades of the stairs offer us the one and only gesture that clarifies our pain or our pride. The bench calls to our trembling knees, the window laughs love to our lips. The wind and the trees call. Restlessly creation stirs in us, flows into us and forms us. Nothing that is not stirred into life by us, the players, on the stage has a right to be there.

The property-man goes on tiptoe to the footlights and says to Reinhardt: "The red carpet is going to act, too, isn't it?" And in those words he uncovers the spirit of the theatre.

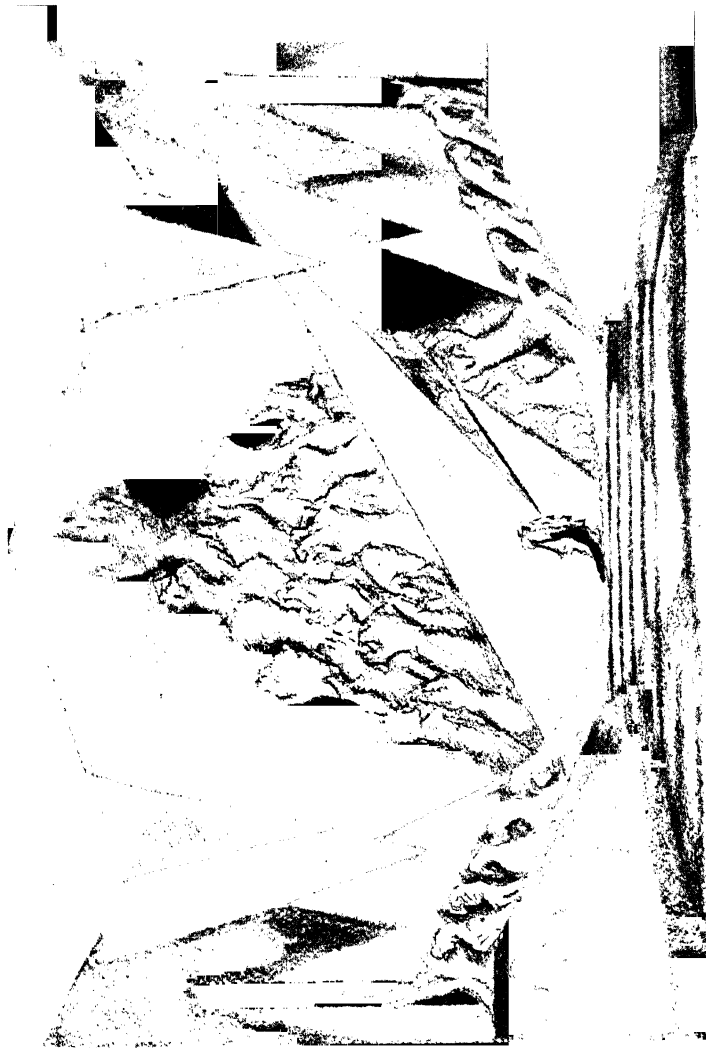
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Note: This article by Gertrud Eysoldt, one of Max Reinhardt's leading players, is translated from "Reinhardt und seine Bühne" by permission of the publishers, Dr. Eysler & Co., Berlin.





Another freely imagined setting by de Weerth, dramatizing forces of nature and of personality.



A design by de Weerth for *The Trojan Women*. The white penah hanging from above on each side is part of the first border or "treaser." It casts a light shadow on the side wall. At the back is a black void with a set piece in the middle carrying a tortured complex of agonizing hands.





De Weyth's design for the last act of *The Trial of Joan of Arc*.

# THE MIRACLE OF THE CORN

BY PADRAIC COLUM

FARDORROUGHA, (*Far dorr acha*) *A Farmer.*

SHEILA, *Fardorrougha's Wife.*

PAUDEEN, *Fardorrougha's Servant, a Fool.*

AISLINN, (*Aish linn*) *A Child.*

THREE WOMEN.

SHAUN O' THE BOG, *A Poor Man.*

*The action passes in a Farmer's house in Ireland in the old time.*

SCENE: *The Interior of Fardorrougha's House. With the exceptions of A Bin For Corn, A Shelf With Two Vessels, A Shrine, and Two Benches, the fixtures of the interior are conventionally represented: The indication of a door is at Back R, of a hearth is L, of a window is R. The bin for corn is B Centre; it is high and projecting. R of the bin is a shelf on which is a measure and a cup. The shrine is R; it holds a small statue of the Virgin, and a rosary of large beads hangs from it. The benches are R and L; one at the conventional hearth and the other down from the conventional door. All the persons concerned in the action are on the scene when it opens and remain on. They only enter the action when they go up to the bin. Going back to the place they had on the benches takes them out of the action. On the bench near the hearth sit the people of Fardorrougha's household: Fardorrougha, Sheila, Paudeen and Aislinn; On the bench down from the door sit the strangers: Three Women, one of whom has a child with her; and*

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\* Corn is used in the sense that it is used in Ireland and England—any kind of grain—it is the bread-stuff and the symbol of fertility.

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*Shaun o' the Bog. The people are dressed in greys and browns, and brown is the color of the interior. The Three Women and Shaun o' the Bog are poorly dressed; Paudcen is dressed rudely and sandals of hide are bound across his feet; Fardorrougha, Sheila and Aislinn are comfortably dressed.*

*The action begins by Fardorrougha and Paudcen going to the bin.*

PAUDEEN. They're moaning still:  
The cattle are a long time moaning now,  
Day in, day out; and will they never stop  
Their moaning, Master Fardorrougha?

FARDORROUGHA. We could drive the cows  
To another place, but the house would not be safe  
While we were gone; Paudcen, you know  
There are those outside who would break in my door.

PAUDEEN. Aye, the people  
Are bad from want. They're worse off than the cattle:  
The people have to watch  
The black rain and it falling all the day.

FARDORROUGHA. We've hay  
For our own cows; give them a lock  
Of what the widow of Seumas saved.

PAUDEEN. Is it the hay  
That's under the hurdles behind the hedge?

FARDORROUGHA. That hay:  
She put lean beasts upon me, and she owes me  
Their fattening.

*[Paudcen goes back to his place on the bench. Aislinn comes to the bin.]*

FARDORROUGHA. What child is this?

AISLINN. Aislinn is my name.

FARDORROUGHA. Who was it  
Gave you that name? It is strange to name  
Anyone Dream!

AISLINN. My own people  
Gave me that name. And now you'll wonder  
What brings me to your home. Sheila, your wife,  
Has brought me here to keep her company.

FARDORROUGHA. And you are welcome. There are no young  
ones here.

## THE MIRACLE OF THE CORN

AISLINN. I am well-used  
To doing things about a house, and I  
Can sweep the floor, and put the fire down,  
And mind the children.

FARDORROUGHA. There are no children in the house you've  
come to:

Are you  
Afeard of me?

AISLINN. No, Fardorrougha, I'm not afeard.

FARDORROUGHA. You are like  
The brown bird in the cage, Aislinn.

AISLINN. What has Sheila  
Upon her altar? I would like to see:  
It is the image of the Mother of God!  
O why will the rain,  
Dear Mother of God, keep falling? It destroyed  
The crop, before the crop was out of the ground:  
Why will the black rain keep on falling now?

*[Fardorrougha goes back to the bench. Sheila goes to  
Aislinn.]*

SHEILA. It is the will of God.

AISLINN. God's will is set  
Against us all; it is against  
The cattle in the field, and it was they  
Stood by his crib; they're moaning always now:  
He has forgotten them.

SHEILA. Do not be listening to  
The cattle moaning; do not be watching  
The black rain and it falling all the day.

AISLINN. You, God has not forgotten.

SHEILA. God has not forgotten  
Me, Aislinn.

AISLINN. If He has left  
Your fields to the rain, He knows that you  
Have a good roof and riches under it.

SHEILA. To have them is no sign  
That God remembers one: I used to look  
Upon my roof and riches, and yet say  
"You have forgotten me, Almighty God!"

AISLINN. And could you say,  
When there was corn, "You have forgotten me,  
Almighty God?"

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SHEILA. And when I would look  
Upon my fields and they heavy with the grain,  
"You have remembered the furrows," I would say,  
"And they are fruitful, but you have forgotten  
Me, Almighty God!"  
And now,  
Now when the furrows are forgotten, He,  
He has remembered me. O Aislinn, child,  
Your arms put round me—I would have you near:  
I want  
Your face before me; I would have a face  
Like yours, but glad; a child's face glad and bright!

[*Paudeen goes to the bins and opens them, one after the other.*]

PAUDEEN. That's empty, and that will take some filling; too;  
That's empty, and it will hold an apron-full;  
That's empty, and you can put more  
Than a cap-full in it.

SHEILA. What are you doing at the bins, Paudeen?

PAUDEEN. Making them ready to put corn in them:  
"Better have the corn in the bins," says he,  
"Than in the barn, after what happened  
Last night in the barn," says he.

SHEILA. What was it happened?

PAUDEEN. "And only Gorav," says he,  
"Only Gorav, the good dog, got the man by the throat,  
There would be a thief in the parish and a wronged man," says he.

SHEILA. The hard, hard man.

PAUDEEN. "There's a good door to my house," says he,  
"And the bin's within for corn; and if the priest," says he,  
Can't put the fear of God into the people,  
Gorav, maybe, can," says he.  
That's empty, that's empty, that's empty.

[*Paudeen goes back to his place on the bench.*]

SHEILA. He has all  
The corn that's in the country, and he sets brutes  
To guard it. The people bring him their cattle  
Before he gives them corn to keep them living.

AISLINN. I'm not afraid  
Of Fardorrougha.

SHEILA. He is not set

## THE MIRACLE OF THE CORN

In hardness yet; he'll give back in arm-fulls  
What he took in his hands!

AISLINN. Will it be long till then,  
Woman of Fardorrrougha?

SHEILA. Not long, not long:  
The fruit is ripening that will bring him to  
Himself; O Aislinn, do not think  
Too hardly of my man; there was no child  
About our house, Aislinn!

[*Fardorrrougha goes to the bins bringing with him a bag  
of corn.*]

FARDORROUGHA. Woman of the house, be careful that you put  
The big bolt on the door when it gets dark.

SHEILA. Let it not come  
Between you and your rest, Fardorrrougha.

FARDORROUGHA. I grudge  
To give them corn even for what they bring.

SHEILA. Look at Aislinn here:  
Would you not let it all go with the wind  
To have a child like Aislinn for you own?

FARDORROUGHA. Woman, content yourself  
With what is given.

SHEILA. God has given  
House and mill, and land and riches, but not  
Content.

FARDORROUGHA. Then let what is not  
Trouble us not.

SHEILA. Aislinn was with me all the day; Aislinn  
Will find a bin for you. Aislinn, take  
A measure off the dresser, and help Fardorrrougha  
Empty the sack.

FARDORROUGHA. Aislinn! It was a woman surely  
That named her Dream.

SHEILA. She is a biddable child, and one that's good  
About a house.

FARDORROUGHA. She'll have no need  
To do much while she's here.

SHEILA. And isn't it well, Fardorrrougha,  
To see a child that isn't white-faced?

FARDORROUGHA. The corn into the bin.

SHEILA. Isn't it a comfort

## THEATRE ARTS MAGAZINE

To see a child like Aislinn here? Then think  
Of a glad, bright child!

FARDORROUGHA. I have no thought  
To go that far. That world, woman,  
The world of bud and blossom, has gone by:  
There's only now,  
The ragged sky, the poor and wasted ground,  
The broken-spirited—the people  
Like you and me and Paudeen.

SHEILA. No, Fardorrougha, no.

FARDORROUGHA. The world of bud and blossom has gone by.

SHEILA. No, Fardorrougha.

Listen to me, Fardorrougha!

FARDORROUGHA. Well, my woman.

SHEILA. I have something,  
Fardorrougha, to tell to you.

FARDORROUGHA. And I am listening, woman.

[*Paudeen goes to the bins.*]

PAUDEEN. Shaun o' the Bog is on the pass  
Before the barn.

FARDORROUGHA. Before the barn? Is it me he wants?

PAUDEEN. It's for the woman  
Of the house he's asking. "Is she by herself?"  
Says he to me.

FARDORROUGHA. She's not by herself, if that's the chance  
He's seeking. You, Sheila;  
There's something else you would have said, maybe,  
"Loose the corn you've gathered." Let you not,  
Or the harsh word that has not been, will be  
Between us.  
I'll see the man, and if he wants to make it  
A bargain that is fair, it's with myself  
That he must talk.

[*Fardorrougha goes back to the bench. Paudeen has  
some hay in his hands. He has taken it from under  
where he sat.*]

PAUDEEN. Where did he say  
I was to put the hay I got under the hedge?

SHEILA. Where the cows are. O  
How can your mind keep on the hay? I know:  
It is because you're simple! Or so they say.  
Paudeen,

## THE MIRACLE OF THE CORN

Why do they call you a fool? Why  
Do they call him a fool, Aislinn?

AISLINN. It is because  
His mind keeps on the one thing only.

SHEILA. He can see only  
The hay that's in his hands. But then they are all  
Foolish! Paudeen, they that gathered  
Many thoughts while in the womb are foolish now  
As you are!

PAUDEEN. But you said  
I was a clean, well-built boy, anyhow,  
Woman of the house.

SHEILA. Yes, I said it.  
[*Paudeen goes back to the bench.*]

AISLINN. I'm not afraid  
Of Fardorrougha: I do not think him hard.

SHEILA. His heart opened to you.

AISLINN. He knows that I  
Am not afraid of him.  
SHEILA. His heart opened to you, and that's a sign:  
Yes, that's a sign I take.

AISLINN. And do you think that he would give  
The harsh word to you?

SHEILA. O Aislinn, pray:  
Pray that it will never come to that; the thought  
Of the harsh word has come to me,  
Again and again, like some dark bird.

AISLINN. And have you never had  
The harsh word from him?

SHEILA. But now  
The harsh word would be the end of all:  
Listen to me! Outside the rain  
Is falling, and the desolation of the rain  
Is very near me; if he gave me  
The harsh word, the desolation  
Would be all round me—nothing else would be:  
O glad, bright child of my dream, tender, shining  
Apple-blossom, what fruit would you bud into  
And the tree of you with desolation round it?

[*The Three Women leave the bench and come to the bins.  
One has a child with her.*]



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SHEILA. What can I do for you, women?

FIRST WOMAN. We have eaten  
Only nettles and roots since the want came:  
Our children droop.

SECOND WOMAN. You do not know what it is  
To see a child droop.

THIRD WOMAN. God has not opened  
Doors of madness and pain for you.

*[Sheila takes a vessel and holds it to a child who drinks.]*

FIRST WOMAN. Do not forget my child.

SHEILA. Take  
What is in my house, women.

*[She opens a bin and fills a woman's apron with corn.  
The other women hold out their aprons. Sheila fills  
them.]*

FIRST WOMAN. May God  
Heap up store for you, and may you have  
Clan with store.

SECOND WOMAN. May God be with your husband when his hand  
Scatters the seed, and may his labor be  
Prosperous!

THIRD WOMAN. And may your own labor be  
Light, and watched by the Mother of God!

SHEILA. Women, who am I  
That ye should pray for me!

*[The Women go to the bench. Sheila stands quiet.  
Aislinn goes to her.]*

AISLINN. Now there is no more  
O' the corn.

SHEILA. But God will have love  
And pity for us.

AISLINN. The bins are emptied—will Fardorrougha . . . ?

SHEILA. O hush!  
There is the cattle's moan; here is Paudéen,  
Who brings them hay—Paudéen who is  
With the broken things! My heart is heavy again!

AISLINN. Fardorrougha . . . .

SHEILA. Fardorrougha! I had forgotten him:  
God protect me!

The rain, the rain! The black and ragged sky,

## THE MIRACLE OF THE CORN

The poor and wasted ground—how could there be  
Any but Pauddeen's like.

PAUDEEN. But you said  
I was a clean and well-built boy yourself.

SHEILA. I said it. And now, Pauddeen,  
Open the bins.

[*Pauddeen lets down the fronts of the bins and they are  
shown to be empty.*]

PAUDEEN. O what will we tell  
Fardorrougha? Can any of you think  
Of a story to tell him?

SHEILA. We can tell him  
No story at all.

AISLINN. But we might  
Keep him from the bins.

SUEILA. No, Aislinn, no:  
No good would be in that.  
It was the right I did: Their children now  
Around them crowd. O children, I would give  
Bread to you, again and over again!

I, too,  
Was one of them who had their minds upon  
The one thing only; I hardened  
To make things easy for myself. It is not  
"God protect me," I should be saying now,  
But "God forgive me."

[*Shaun o' the Bog comes from the bench. He goes to  
the bins.*]

SHAUN. Fardorrougha told me  
To wait upon him here.

SHEILA. And what has Fardorrougha  
Promised to you, Shaun?

SHAUN. The corn in the bins. And I have given him  
My wool and loom.

SHEILA. He has not what he thinks he has, but you will not  
Go empty for all that.

SHAUN. It is well for Aislinn,  
The child that's with you in this house.

SHEILA. Aislinn, go talk to Shaun; he need not be  
Anxious nor fretted.

AISLINN. Nor need you be  
Anxious nor fretted, Sheila.

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SHEILA. I am not anxious any more, Aislinn.

*[Fardorrougha goes to the bins.]*

FARDORROUGHA. The corn is here that I will give you, Shaun,  
For wool and loom; open you the bin,  
And see how much is in it.

*[Shaun opens the bin. A very great quantity of corn gushes out.]*

FARDORROUGHA. I did not think  
So much was there. He'll not get all  
For wool and loom; I will not wrong myself;  
As much as half is fair.

*[He turns to the bins and sees that Shaun, Sheila and Aislinn are kneeling beside the heap of corn.]*

FARDORROUGHA. Why are you kneeling, Shaun?

SHAUN. I kneel because I know  
My children will be fed.

FARDORROUGHA. Why are you kneeling, Sheila?

SHEILA. I kneel because I know  
The fields will break to corn because of the love  
And pity God has for us.

FARDORROUGHA. Why are you kneeling, Aislinn?

AISLINN. I kneel because I know  
A miracle has happened; Sheila need not dread  
The harsh word from you any more nor never.

FARDORROUGHA. An air comes from it all—a smell of growing,  
Green, growing corn; and I mind that I  
Brought Sheila from her mother's to this house  
Across a field of corn that smelled sweet, sweet,  
And whispered lovingly. I'm greatly changed,  
And often I am strange even to myself.  
What good 's in what I've gathered? It's between  
Myself and her; but when she rises now  
Nothing will be between us; at what she'll say  
All I have gathered I shall give away.

*[With Sheila, Aislinn and Shaun still kneeling the scene closes.]*

## THEATRE ARTS BOOKSHELF

MODERN DRAMA IN EUROPE. By Storm Jameson. "This essay is an attempt to . . . suggest that the history of the drama during the past fifty years has been the history of a swift rise, and a slow descent to disintegration and unproductive repetition." . . . "Throughout I have judged dramatists by the one critical standard, that demands from tragedy the pity and fear of strength defeated, from comedy, sanity and criticism of life." In these utterances we have the point of view and the standard, both consistently maintained, that render this book perhaps the most thoughtful and disinterested critique of modern drama yet written in English. Though possessed of principles, the author is apparently without initial prejudices. She has read widely. Her appraisals are independent and original. Even to the critical catchwords, such as "realism," "naturalism," and "romance," which she is forced to use, she gives new and more philosophic significance. For a "naturalism" that simply reproduces what is basest and ugliest in life, without faith in humanity or hope for the race, she has an unqualified condemnation. Gorky's *Night Lodging*, though naturalistic, is a work of art, since it shows man, though defeated, at least struggling toward the light. Her re-valuation of playwrights about whom we are only too ready to accept cut and dried opinions, is informing and stimulating: "Could he [Strindberg] but have laughed, have shaken off the horror of his visions, he might have been the greatest of modern dramatists." One may agree or disagree with the multitude of searching critical pronouncements in the book, but he is at least likely to be stirred to reflection. Unfortunately, the author entirely ignores the purely theatric side of plays and playwrights, and only in the summary that ends the volume does she touch upon the advances in playhouse construction and in production that are making for a new drama all over the world. One can but suspect that the summary was an afterthought written in the light of wider knowledge of the actual theatre. (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co.)

PARISINA MALATESTA. A dramatic poem in three episodes. By Armando Romano. English verse by Ada Sterling. The famous fifteenth century Italian story of the beautiful wife of Nicolo d'Este, lord of Ferrara, who loved and was loved by Ugo, Nicolo's natural son, with black tragedy as the outcome, is here told in verse of considerable richness and poetic beauty. Indeed, the sheer ornament seems at times too abundant, extraneous; the play as a whole is perhaps indirect, over-elaborate; and the style shows the tendency to fatal facility which is often characteristic of Italian verse. But

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these possible shortcomings are counterbalanced by strong situations that involve elemental human passions, by "atmosphere," color, and music, and by clear-cut though largely typical characterization. Parisina herself is a less striking person than Serenella, the fair slave who loves Ugo and betrays through jealousy the love between Ugo and Parisina. Parisina's women form a kind of chorus, often musical, but more often delaying the action by trivial comment. The play inevitably challenges comparison with D'Annunzio's *Francesca da Rimini*, and stands the test better than might be expected. Though it presents nothing new in story and situation, it is not merely an attempt at poetic drama, it is an actual achievement. In the acting, revision would be necessary, even for an audience with a taste for poetic drama on such a theme. Miss Sterling's free translation is always adequate and often of poetic beauty. (New York: Il Corroccio Publishing Co.)

**THREE PLAYS.** By Stark Young. *Madretta; Addio; At the Shrine.* That the author of these plays knows the art of the theatre, understands acting values and the dramatic quality of the spoken word is evident at the first reading. But there is something more than that in the special sense they give of being unusually good material for the playhouse. It is the author's sure grasp of what is dramatic in life—in character, situation, relationship—and his ability to focus a human story in the short space allotted to a one-act play in such a way that he not only plays out before us the crucial moment, but suggests all that has gone to the making of the crux and much that will come from it. The material for the plays is well-chosen from corners of our American life not too familiar. They are all tragedies of character, all built on the theme of sacrifice for love, swift-moving, real, and convincing. The characters—there are only eight in the three plays—are individuals and not types, and every one is a part worth playing—Simon, young Nani, his Creole wife, and Jean-Marie, her lover, in *Madretta*; the Priest and Ann, in *At the Shrine*; Monkey Tom, Harry Boyd, John and Susa, in *Addio*. (Cincinnati, Stewart Kidd Co.)

**THE EMPEROR JONES, DIFF'RENT, THE STRAW.** By Eugene O'Neill. O'Neill's brilliant and forward-looking play, *The Emperor Jones*, is already a matter of record in this magazine and in the American theatre; its interest for the moment lies in speculation as to how soon and to what extent directors of little theatres will recognize its marked possibilities as an addition to their repertoires. A reading of *Diff'rent* re-emphasizes the power and truth of the dialog and unimportance of the play as a significant work of art when compared with the tragedy of the jungle. Nowhere has O'Neill written on such a consistent, high level of dramatic expression as in the dialog of *Diff'rent*; yet, in conception and develop-

## THEATRE ARTS BOOKSHELF

ment, the play seems to point backward rather than forward; of such is not the theatre of tomorrow. *The Straw*, O'Neill's first long play to be published before production, is peculiarly hard to estimate on the printed page. It is written strongly and truly, and its characterization is excellent; but its emotional effect as drama is bound up so closely with its subject, the ravages of tuberculosis, that the individual reaction of reader or critic is unreliable as a test of its dramatic worth. Actual production before the group-consciousness of an audience is always the ultimate test of a play; in the case of *The Straw*, no other test seems at all adequate. (New York: Boni & Liveright.)

REPRESENTATIVE PLAYS BY AMERICAN DRAMATISTS. Edited by Montrose J. Moses. (Vol. III; 1856-1917). One should be middle-aged to enjoy to the full this collection of the plays which represent the growth of the American drama during the last sixty years. Not because the individual plays require either the experience or the supposed poise of middle-age for their appreciation. Far from it. Almost from first to last they are red-blooded, quick-happening, full-living plays, such as youth enjoys and creates—'young people and a young theatre.' But if one has gone to the theatre for, say, twenty-five years or more he will remember most of these plays as he first saw them, and will be able to add the thrills of memory to the dispassionate interest aroused in reading, and so will give them a right valuation. For these plays are—the earlier ones, especially—plays for actors much more than our plays today. Which means not only that they contained 'fat' parts, like *Rip Van Winkle*, *Francesca da Rimini*, *Paul Kowar*, but that they were so written that they needed an intelligent actor's creative interpretation to supplement the dramatist's writing. It will not do to read these early plays and then decide that our fathers were satisfied with the theatrical while we require the human; the plays were written theatrically and the characters humanized in their interpretation—some of us remember that. And seeing them in the same volume with *Shenandoah*, *In Mizzoura*, *The Moth and the Flame*, *The New York Idea*, *The Easiest Way*, and *The Return of Peter Grimm* gives, better than any number of essays, a sense of the things we are growing out of and the things we are growing towards, dramatically. Above all, it gives a sense of steady progress, with the longest step ahead after the close of the volume. It is doubtful whether anybody else in America could have done as well and as lovingly as Montrose J. Moses has, all the work of sifting, sorting, editing, presenting old material which such a volume entails, and the result is well worth the effort. The prefaces are, themselves, an interesting narrative of the life of our theatre for two generations. (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co.)

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**PLAYS FOR CLASSROOM INTERPRETATION.** Edited by Edwin Van B. Knickerbocker. The study and dramatic reading of contemporary plays has now become a recognized part of the English course in many high schools. When the plays have literary merit, they deserve consideration by the side of novels, poems, and essays. The intelligent interpretation of them, which this volume aims to encourage, gives insight into human character, stimulates the imagination in legitimate fashion, inculcates good habits of voice control, speech, and bodily posture; and, not least important, helps to mould the taste of that audience of the future which seems the chief hope of the theatre. All this and more Mr. Knickerbocker makes plain in his careful and detailed introduction to his volume, which deals with every phase of the study and production of classroom plays, and should prove of great value to both teachers and students. The plays have been judiciously selected with a view to the special needs and aptitudes of the pupils, and all have proved themselves practicable by actual use in the classroom. They are Dunsany's *Golden Doom*, Pilot's *Two Crooks and a Lady*, Doris Halman's *Will o' the Wisp*, Lady Gregory's *Spreading the News*, Margaret Oliver's *Turtle Dove*, Beulah Dix's *Allison's Lad*, and scene 2, act III of Phillips' *Ulysses*. Altogether the book is not only timely and aims at furthering an excellent movement, but is intelligent and practical. (New York: Henry Holt and Co.)

**CHIEF CONTEMPORARY DRAMATISTS.** Second Series. Selected and Edited by Thomas H. Dickinson. The first volume of this series, issued in 1915, has become an indispensable part of every library of plays. The second is welcome, and commands respect if only for the name of its editor; but it will scarcely take its place by the side of its predecessor. These dramatists, though certainly "contemporary" are by no means all "chief"; and some of the plays, such as Guitry's *Pasteur*, are of such questionable merit that one marvels how they found place in such a collection. But the editor could doubtless tell of agonizing experience with copyrights and of other difficulties which only the conscientious editor encounters. And, after all, here are eighteen complete plays, each with some sort of claim to recognition, and some of them, such as Gorky's *Lower Depths*, of great distinction, representing England, the United States, Ireland, France, Germany, Austria, Italy, Spain, Russia, and Scandinavia. At least four of the Continental plays are here printed for the first time in English: Porto-Riche's *Loving Wife* (*L'Amoureuse*), Guitry's *Pasteur*, Bahr's *Concert*, and Heiberg's *Tragedy of Love*. The collection as a whole shows an interesting drift toward new material and new forms—the sign of a vital and progressive theatre. The editor's work has evidently been done with rare intelligence and care, and the result is a volume which be-

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longs in every library of the drama both public and private. (Boston, New York, Chicago: Houghton, Mifflin Co.)

**BODY AND SOUL.** A play in four acts. By Arnold Bennett. The recent plays by this celebrated novelist and playwright present a striking study in deterioration: *What the Public Wants*, *Milestones*, *The Great Adventure*, *The Title*, *Sacred and Profane Love*, to *Body and Soul*. The last named is a satirical comedy of manners, with plenty of action and some funny speeches and funny moments but no distinction or grace. Blanche Nixon, from the English midlands, a seller of typewriters, who impersonates Lady Mab Infold and "gets away with it," is an original character, so clever, sensible, and hearty, that she would probably make a great hit on the stage. (New York: George H. Doran Co.)

**A BILL OF DIVORCEMENT.** A play in three acts. By Clemence Dane. A serious play; time, 1933, when the present divorce bill now under discussion in England, shall have become a law. A readable play and one that ought to please an audience, not because it has to do with insanity as a ground for divorce, but because it presents an interesting situation—the divorced husband recovering his reason and coming home to find his former wife about to marry another man. The outstanding character is the daughter, Sydney Fairfield, a clear-sighted, impulsive and lovable girl of eighteen, who encourages her mother to marry the other man, but who sticks to her father because he needs her. She is a genuine creation. (New York: The Macmillan Co.)

**ON VENGEANCE HEIGHT.** A melodrama in one act. By Allan Davis and Cornelia C. Vencill. Vagabond Plays No. 2. This last act in the long tragedy of a feud among southern mountaineers is startlingly melodramatic in its plot, but in its characterization, which possesses actual distinction, it is more than mere melodrama. First produced by the Vagabond Players of Baltimore, it is a valuable addition to Little Theatre play material. (Baltimore: The Norman Remington Co.)

**RELEASE.** A melodrama in one act. By Edward H. Smith. Vagabond Plays No. 4. Tense-ness of situation could not well go further than in this little play about four criminals who toss a coin to determine which of them shall give himself up to suffer death at the hands of the law in order to save the others. It is a "thriller" of the first order. First produced by the Vagabond Players, it will doubtless figure largely on next season's Little Theatre bills. (Baltimore: The Norman Remington Co.)



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MARY, QUEEN OF SCOTS. A drama in verse. In two periods and eight scenes. By Ada Sterling. The second period of this play is avowedly based upon Schiller's *Maria Stuart*. The episodes have little interconnection and the verse is more than usually wooden, but the sixth episode, the meeting between Mary and Elizabeth in the woods of Fotheringay, is dramatic and well-written, and might be presented as a one-act play. (New York: Oxford University Press.)

ESSAYS ON MODERN DRAMATISTS. By William Lyon Phelps. Barrie, Shaw, Galsworthy, Fitch, Maeterlinck, and Rostand are the subjects of these—not "essays," but pleasant, verbose, and altogether uncritical talks. Like the same author's *Twentieth Century Theatre*, this book simply records the impressions of an intelligent and appreciative theatre-goer and is just as much given to unjustified superlatives and outrageous generalizations. It adds nothing to our knowledge of the playwrights discussed or of the theatre in general. The best thing about it is that is written by a man who loves, and frequents the theatre and wants to see it do its best. And Professor Phelps' appreciation and active promotion of what is best in the theatre will cover a multitude of sins—even this one. (New York: The Macmillan Co.)

BODY AND SOUL. By Elizabeth Marsh. An interesting verse play, half mystic but wholly vital and suggestive. One that is well worth reading and that would act well in capable hands. (Boston: The Cornhill Co.)

OLLANTA, AN ANCIENT PERUVIAN DRAMA. By Frances C. Wenrich. This is not the original play but a re-dramatization from the story of the play and a few fragments published in a miscellany of literature. (Boston: Richard Badger.)

PAN IN AMBUSH. A fantasy in one act. By Marjorie Patterson. A good deal of humor, satire à la Gilbert, and verse which at the best of its facility and fun reminds one again of Gilbert, make a pleasing fantasy. Rightly played, it ought to captivate a Little Theatre audience, and it seems to have done this at the Vagabond Playhouse, where it was first produced. (Baltimore: The Norman Remington Co.)

SIX WHO PASS WHILE THE LENTILS BOIL. By Stuart Walker. This is a separate edition of the well-known fantasy, a standard in Little Theatre bills, formerly printed only in the first volume of *Portmanteau* plays. (Cincinnati: Stewart Kidd Co.)

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The Studios also designed and executed the costumes and supervised the scenery and lighting of the new Gertrude Hoffman Production.

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